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In-depth evaluation of the global development trends, issues and policies, and global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions

Note by the Secretary-General

In conformity with paragraph 5 (e) (i) of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, and paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 54/244 of 23 December 1999, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the global development trends, issues and policies, and global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions. The report has been reviewed by the relevant departments and offices. The Secretary-General takes note of its findings and concurs with its recommendations.

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Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the global development trends, issues and policies and global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions

Summary

The present report reviews the work of the subprogrammes of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, global development trends, issues and policies, and global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions. After revision of the medium-term plan, in 1998, the subprogramme, Global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, was discontinued. Its activities, integrated into other subprogrammes, are reviewed according to the revised structure of the medium-term plan.

Under the subprogrammes reviewed, and the activities within other subprogrammes, analysis of socio-economic development trends, issues and policies is carried out. The results of this analysis are presented in recurrent publications, mainly the annual economic and social surveys and a number of topical reports, studies and discussion papers. Under most subprogrammes, operational activities that are complementary to research and analytical work are also undertaken. The need to achieve an integrated approach to economic and social development is taken into account in the planning of activities.

The main findings of the in-depth evaluation are presented in section III (global programmes) and section IV (regional programmes) of the present report. Section V elaborates common issues of programme implementation, highlighting good practices in a number of units. In section VI, recommendations are made to enhance the contribution of the economic and social surveys to intergovernmental processes, improve the interaction between analytical functions and operational activities at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, develop the collaboration between the different subprogrammes throughout the Secretariat and promote higher visibility for the results of analytical work.

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I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-seventh session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended that an in-depth evaluation of global development trends, issues and policies, and global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies (subprogrammes 7.3 and 7.4 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001), and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions, be prepared for consideration by the Committee in 2000 (A/52/16, para. 306).

2. In its recommendation, the Committee noted the need for desired flexibility to accommodate possible changes that might arise in the context of the reform proposals of the Secretary-General and subsequent decisions that might be adopted by the General Assembly. In 1997, following the establishment of one single department in this sector, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the subprogramme structure of the medium-term plan was reorganized (see para. 7 below). The present report presents the in-depth evaluation findings according to this revised structure. The global subprogrammes are reviewed in section III and the regional subprogrammes in section IV of the present report. Section V covers a number of common issues of programme implementation.

3. In the conduct of the in-depth evaluation, the following categories of information were utilized by the Central Evaluation Unit of the Office of Internal Oversight Services: (a) United Nations documents; (b) information from internal sources (the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the internal assessments and working documents of the regional commissions); (c) structured interviews and consultations with a number of government representatives, the staff of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions, staff of other Secretariat departments and organizations of the United Nations system and a number of experts, members of the Committee on Development Policy, academics and researchers, in Bangkok, New York and Santiago; and (d) in addition to the categories of information already described, work at other duty stations was assessed through information obtained from the regional commissions in response to specific queries.

II. Institutional arrangements

A. The intergovernmental agenda

4. The United Nations intergovernmental bodies in the economic and social sectors serve as a forum for monitoring and assessing trends and policies in global development as well as for negotiations and the adoption of instruments for international cooperation in development. These deliberations have resulted in the adoption of broad declarations of principles and objectives such as the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, which was adopted in 1990. The Strategy stressed that the major conferences of the United Nations already scheduled for the initial years of the Decade would be important occasions for reaching agreements that would give more specific content to the actions and commitments needed to realize the goals of the Strategy.[1] By resolution 51/240 of 20 June 1997, the General Assembly, building on the outcome of recent United Nations conferences and other relevant agreements, adopted the Agenda for Development, which was aimed at invigorating a renewed and strengthened partnership for development. In the Agenda it was considered that a consensus had emerged, from the major conferences on a multidimensional, comprehensive and integrated approach to development, recognizing, among other things, that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. The Agenda also stated that international cooperation in the formulation and implementation of macroeconomic policies should be reinforced with a view to promoting greater coherence and consistency of domestic policies. It was stressed that the effective implementation of the Agenda required the urgent mobilization and more efficient use of resources for development.

5. Regarding the question of financing for development, the General Assembly decided, in resolution 54/196 of 22 December 1999, to convene a high-level intergovernmental event on the question in 2001, to address national, international and systemic issues relating to financing for development in a holistic manner, in the context of globalization and interdependence. Concerning the review of the implementation of the International Development

Strategy, the Assembly, in resolution 54/206 of 22 December 1999, requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its fifty-fifth session, a draft text of an international development strategy for the first decade of the new millennium, building on the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and meetings, the Agenda for Development and any other relevant ongoing processes, and taking into account the dynamic changes to the world economy.

6. In the view of the Secretary-General, much of the recent work of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies has focused on translating the plans and programmes agreed upon at the global conferences held earlier in the 1990s into action; similarly, the programme of work of the Secretariat was often oriented towards the priorities identified at the conferences (A/52/1, paras. 50-51). The demand for monitoring and appraisal increased with each new signed convention or agreement. The Economic and Social Council, in its agreed conclusions 1995/1, considered that the commissions and other intergovernmental bodies reviewing the implementation of each conference should be able to achieve greater coherence and mutual reinforcement, and that efforts towards coordinated follow-up to international conferences require appropriate measures to avoid and/or eliminate duplication of functions within the United Nations Secretariat.

B. Secretariat arrangements

7. Since the last in-depth evaluation was carried out in 1989 (E/AC.51/1989/4), the global programme implemented at Headquarters has been reorganized twice, in 1992 and in 1997. After the 1992 restructuring, the activities reviewed in the present report were carried out by the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. The 1997 reform, by merging the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis with the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and the Department for Development Support and Management Services into the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, meant, that the new Department, while maintaining a distinct capacity for economic and social data gathering and analysis, would act to consolidate capacities for policy analysis and policy coordination and enhance substantive support for the intergovernmental processes of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres (see A/51/829). This general orientation was endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 52/12 B of 19 December 1997 and the new programme structure was approved by the Assembly in resolution 53/207 of 18 December 1998. The activities of subprogrammes 7.3 and 7.4 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, approved in 1996, were redistributed accordingly (see table 1 below). After the 1997 reorganization, subprogramme 7.3, Global development trends, issues and policies, remained unchanged, while the activities of former subprogramme 7.4, Global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, were integrated into other subprogrammes.

8. At the regional level, the regional commissions, throughout the 1990s, have carried out reforms with differences in content and scope to respond to regional needs as reflected in the priorities set by members of the respective commissions (see Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46, annex III, para. 3). Furthermore, most commissions have attempted to address development problems through interdisciplinary and intersectoral action. As a result, the global subprogrammes under review in the present report do not necessarily have corresponding subprogrammes in all regional commissions (see table 2 below). It is noted that every commission maintains a distinct capacity for the monitoring and analysis of economic and social development trends, issues and policies. In addition to subprogrammes listed in table 2, macro and microeconomic policy analysis is carried out under a number of other subprogrammes (see paras. 31, 38 and 40 below).

Table 1
Main activities of subprogrammes 7.3 and 7.4 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, in relation to the new programme structure of the revised medium-term plan

Subprogramme 7.3, Global development trends, issues and policies	*Moved to new subprogramme 28.7*
(a) Monitoring and assessing, from a global perspective, economic and social developments and policies;	Global development trends, issues and policies
(b) Assisting Governments in their consideration of issues pertaining to the financing of development;	
(c) Assisting Member States and intergovernmental bodies in the early identification of new and emerging issues in the world economy;	

Activities moved from subprogramme 7.4, Global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies	*To new subprogramme*
(d) Monitoring of socio-economic trends, identification of emerging issues and analysis of their implications for policy at the national and international levels;	28.3, Social policy and development
(e) Meeting the needs of Member States for information and policy-oriented analysis on the role of the State and market mechanisms;	28.8, Public administration, finance and development
(f) Addressing aspects of linkages between political and economic issues and policies, at the request of Governments and intergovernmental bodies.	

Source: A/51/6/Rev.1 and A/53/6/Rev.1.

Table 2
Regional subprogrammes of the medium-term plan for the period of 1998-2001 corresponding to the global subprogrammes 7.3 and 7.4

Regional commissions	*Subprogrammes*
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)	Subprogramme 14.1, Facilitating economic and social policy analysis
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)	Subprogramme 15.2, Development research and policy analysis Subprogramme 15.3, Social development
Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)	Subprogramme 16.4, Economic analysis
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)	Subprogramme 17.4, Macroeconomic equilibria, investment, financing Subprogramme 17.5, Social development and social equity Subprogramme 17.6, Administrative management
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)	Subprogramme 18.3, Economic development and global changes

Source: A/51/6/Rev.1 and A/53/6/Rev.1.

9. After the two reorganizations of the Secretariat, a number of subprogrammes were significantly reformulated; it is not possible to precisely follow the shifts in resources for all activities. Broadly speaking, from an examination of the staffing levels for the bienniums 1988-1989 and 1998-1999, it can be concluded that, in this area of work of the Secretariat, over a 10-year period, resources remained relatively stable, with the exception of two programmes:

(a) At DESA, the staffing level for subprogramme 28.7, Global development, trends, issues and policies, is 50 per cent lower than it was 10 years earlier, for a level of activity not significantly reduced;

(b) At ECE, the staffing level of subprogramme 16.4, Economic analysis, is 30 per cent lower, for a relatively higher level of activity.

C. Intergovernmental guidance

10. The General Assembly, in resolution 51/219 of 18 December 1996, emphasized the importance of the contribution of the sectoral, regional and central intergovernmental bodies, in particular the main committees of the Assembly, in reviewing and improving the quality of the medium-term plan and its revisions. Out of all the subprogrammes reviewed in the present report, only the programme of work of subprogramme 28.7, Global development trends, issues and policies, is not reviewed by a specialized intergovernmental body. In the previous in-depth evaluation of this programme, in 1989, this situation had already been noted and it was observed that, as a consequence, the programme did not receive any overall direction, guidance or oversight from specialized intergovernmental bodies in the programme planning of its activities (E/AC.51/1989/4, para. 14). In 1990, the draft medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 was submitted to the Committee for Development Planning, a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council, for comments (see para. 17 below); this was not done for subsequent medium-term plans. The Committee for Development Planning, among the different tasks entrusted to it, considered and evaluated the programmes and activities of the organs of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies relating to economic planning and projections (E/1996/97, para. 190 (f)). It should be noted that the proposed programme of work of subprogramme 28.8, Public administration, finance and development, is reviewed by the Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance, a subsidiary body of the Council comparable to the Committee for Development Planning. In examining the question at its thirty-ninth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination emphasized the importance of adequate reviews by specialized intergovernmental bodies and recommended that these bodies, as well as the Economic and Social Council and the Main Committees of the General Assembly, should include an agenda item on programme planning in their programmes of work (A/54/16, para. 55). The review of the proposed programme of work of subprogramme 28.7 was not on the agenda of the 1999 session of the Economic and Social Council nor on that of the Second Committee at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

III. Global programmes

A. Global development trends, issues and policies

1. *World Economic and Social Survey*

11. The results of research and analysis on development trends, issues and policies carried out under subprogramme 28.7 are brought to the attention of intergovernmental bodies either as separate reports or as part of the *World Economic Survey*, which, in 1994, was renamed the *World Economic and Social Survey*, and expanded to respond to the increasingly recognized linkages and interactions between economic and social issues. When the *Survey* was first introduced in 1947 it was the only publication providing an overview of global economic developments, however, there are now several publications that fulfil this role from different perspectives. The *Survey* continues to be published to broaden the debate and to introduce essential social and political dimensions into discussions that might otherwise have been dominated by narrowly economic and financial considerations. [2]

12. Before the reorganization of the programme of work of the Economic and Social Council in 1991, the *Survey* was one of the basic reports used in the general debate of the Council on international economic and social policy. It is now presented to the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Council and is also included in the documentation of the general debate of the Second Committee of the General Assembly. As an indication of the use made by these bodies of the analysis presented in the *Survey*, in 1988, there were 22 explicit references to the *Survey* in the Council's general debate. In 1998, there were two references to the *Survey* during the high-level segment. In the same year, during the general debate of the Second Committee, there were three references to the *Survey*. There are presently references to a number of comparable publications, although the number of references to each publication is not higher than for the *Survey*. Regarding the continued relevance of such publications for the work of intergovernmental bodies, the General Assembly noted in the annex to resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996, that there should be greater use of relevant background documents in the Second Committee such as the *World Economic and Social Survey*, the *Trade and Development Report*, the *World Development Report* and the *World Economic Outlook*.

In the same resolution, the General Assembly also stated its interest in the continued improvement of other reports to make them more concise and action-oriented, by highlighting the critical areas requiring action by the General Assembly and, as appropriate, by making specific recommendations. At the outset, according to Economic and Social Council resolution 26 (IV), the *Survey* was expected to contain recommendations on action to be taken by the Council. Occasionally, over the last 50 years the General Assembly has requested that recommendations to address specific issues be presented in the *Survey*; the last such request, on the matter of global financial flows, was in 1997.

13. Delegates to the General Assembly, interviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit, commented that they use the *Survey* for reference; several stated that they only consult its overview chapter. Regarding its relevance to policy makers in Governments, in response to a 1997 readership survey, to the permanent missions and international organizations, to which only 6 per cent of those surveyed responded, the Commonwealth Secretariat stated that the *Survey* is used regularly to inform the finance ministers, who meet before attending the annual meetings of the World Bank/International Monetary Fund. They found the analysis contained in the *Survey* to be of very high quality and at times more incisive than that put out by the Bretton Woods institutions. With the limited feedback obtained by the programme and by the Central Evaluation Unit, there are indications that the *Survey* is of interest to officials in national ministries, when it reaches them, although at the national level more attention is given to country-specific information. Development economists interviewed by the Unit stated that they regretted that insufficient attention is given to analysis found in the *Survey*.

14. Since the 1980s, the *Survey* has taken a more analytical and less descriptive approach than before and has furthered the discussion of forecasts of global economic activity. The improved capacity to forecast was facilitated by the programme's association with the Project LINK (see para. 42 below). Although appreciation for the improvements in the presentation of the *Survey* were expressed in 1995, it was noted that the needs of members of intergovernmental bodies for concise and action-oriented documents have not yet been adequately addressed. The *Survey* is one of the most voluminous publications in its field, with a certain degree of overlap with other publications and its findings are, in general, presented to induce reflection rather than action; policy recommendations do not stand out. The review of the United Nations economic reports conducted by the United Nations University (UNU)/World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER), in 1997 at the request of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (A/53/31, para. 178), recommended that the *Survey* focus on one central theme each year, as other comparable reports do, as it may lead to more in-depth and innovative analysis. Part II of the *Survey* is now set aside for the discussion of one central theme. Regarding overlap with other publications, the Secretariat decided that the *Survey* will focus primarily on the integrated analysis of economic and social development at the global and national levels, while the *Trade and Development Report* will focus on the integrated treatment of development and interrelated issues in the areas of trade, finance, technology and investment.[3]

2. Substantive services provided by the Secretariat

15. Support is provided under subprogramme 28.7 to intergovernmental bodies in relation to specific issues on their agenda through the preparation of topical reports or in-session substantive services. Regarding the question of financing for development, services were provided under the subprogramme to the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on the question for its work during the Fifty-third session of the General Assembly. The constructive inputs made to the discussions of the Working Group led to the formulation of recommendations on the agenda of the high-level forum, which will convene on the matter in 2001. This initiative involved liaising with Governments and a broad range of stakeholders, including actors both within and outside the United Nations, as requested by the General Assembly in resolution 52/179 of 18 December 1997. In addition, the Secretariat developed and maintained the Financing for Development web site (www.un.org/esa/analysis.ffd). The site, which was designed with the needs of participants in the Working Group and stakeholders in mind and was updated in near real-time, became a useful tool for those involved in the process. In its resolution 54/196, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to initiate preliminary consultations with all relevant stakeholders, in particular the World Bank, the

International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, on the potential modalities of their participation in the upcoming High-level International Intergovernmental Event for Financing for Development.

3. Long-term trends in economic development

16. Comprehensive reports on long-term trends in economic development were submitted by the Secretariat to the General Assembly as early as 1982 and were regularly updated to serve as a quantitative and qualitative framework for the preparation and monitoring of implementation of international development strategies. Regarding the Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, it was observed that it was quickly outdated by the unanticipated worsening of the international economic situation, which made many of its targets irrelevant (A/43/376, para. 4). During the Fourth Decade, more attention was given to the implementation of specific commitments entered into at the major United Nations conferences and meetings. In this area, the Secretariat discontinued the preparation of reports on long-term trends and did not maintain the database used for this purpose. Reports on long-term trends are still prepared in other areas, such as population or sustainable development. For example, the report entitled *Critical Trends: Global Change and Sustainable Development* (ST/ESA/255), prepared in 1997 by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development for the review of implementation of Agenda 21, surveyed long-term trends in selected environmental and socio-economic issues. It focused on the role of policy in influencing developments over the short and long term — a number of issues being explored in a 10 to 60 year time-frame. Subprogramme 28.7 is mandated to provide perspective studies of long-term global trends in economic and social development (A/53/6/Rev.1, para. 28.19 (c)), however, the studies prepared under the subprogramme are mostly based on short-term outlooks or medium-term perspectives. Other organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund, in its *World Economic Outlook*, also tend to limit themselves to medium-term baseline scenarios. The international development strategy for the first decade of the new millennium requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/206 (see para. 5 above), should aim, as set forth in the resolution, at monitoring long-term trends in the global economy as well as the attainment of internationally agreed targets.

4. Committee on Development Policy

17. Substantive servicing is provided under subprogramme 28.7 to the Committee on Development Policy, the former Committee on Development Planning, a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. Its members are experts serving in their individual capacity. Established in 1964, the Committee was entrusted with various tasks, including: to assess world development trends and prospects; to review the list of the least developed among the developing countries and to consider improvements in the criteria for identifying these countries; and generally to study individual questions in its field of competence referred to it by the Council, the Secretary-General or the executive heads of the specialized agencies. To carry out its tasks efficiently, the Committee, in addition to its annual meeting, used to hold meetings of up to three working groups, and submitted annual reports to the Council. During the 1980s, the reports were frequently cited during interventions of the members of the Council; in recent years, citations have become rare and often reflect disagreements with the views of the Committee. In 1997, in his programme for reform, the Secretary-General proposed that the Committee be discontinued and that, instead, the Council be assisted by specialized panels of experts on particular subjects.

18. After the 1998 review of its subsidiary bodies, the Economic and Social Council decided, in resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, to maintain the Committee and arranged that the Council would decide each year on its appropriate programme of work. The Committee was to continue the triennial review of the status of least developed countries, to meet once a year for a period of five days and to explore the scope for effective preparations for its deliberations via informal networking arrangements. Although the Council considered that dissemination of information on the Committee's work should be improved, in 1999, the first report of the Committee, prepared under this new arrangement was issued late. This was partially a consequence of the new working arrangements. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs stated that, being new, confronted with a challenging assignment and needing time to meld intellectually, the Committee was unable to finalize its report during its meeting and had to resort to the time-consuming and highly unsatisfactory practice of doing so by correspondence. The Vice-Chair of the Committee introduced the

relevant part of the report to the high-level session of the Council, but little use was made of that part of the report. Later in the session, the Chairman introduced the report as a whole and considerable attention was subsequently paid to the Committee's proposals regarding the incorporation of the vulnerability dimension into the criteria for the designation of least developed countries. In 1999, the Committee continued its work on a vulnerability index as a criterion to designate least developed countries; in addition, the General Assembly requested, in particular, that the new international development strategy (see para. 5 above) be drafted in collaboration with the Committee on Development Policy.

19. Regarding the new working methods recommended by the Council, the Committee was of the view that the nature of its work is such that informal networking arrangements could only be of limited benefit and that additional group discussions were necessary (E/1999/33, para. 136). At the end of 1999, the Council requested the Secretary-General to facilitate an expert group meeting of members of the Committee in early 2000 to enable them to carry out the necessary diagnostic testing and simulations of the proposed criteria for the designation of least developed country status. The new working methods recommended by the Council compare with the long-established methods of work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, which meets once a year to explore, in open discussion, a set of current issues. It should be noted, however, that the Board's discussion is reflected in a brief report to the Secretary-General and does not represent the conclusion of an annual programme of research. Furthermore, the Board has the opportunity to meet a second time each year in its capacity as the Board of Trustees of United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

B. Social policy and development

1. Monitoring and analysis of trends and issues

20. In accordance with the revised medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, activities under subprogramme 28.3, Social policy and development, involve the strengthening of international cooperation for social development, with particular attention to the three core issues of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, poverty eradication, employment generation and social integration. In 1996, the Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1996/7 of 23 July 1996, decided that substantive items of the future sessions of the Commission for Social Development would exclusively address the follow-up to the Summit and would be organized around three sets of subjects:

(a) Consideration of subjects identified in the multi-year programme of work, including the situation of social groups;

(b) Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups, as necessary;

(c) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting social development, as necessary.

The monitoring and analysis of trends and issues, assigned under former subprogramme 7.4, are now integrated into the work on specific issues of concern under subprogramme 28.3, which is outside the scope of the present report. In this regard, it should be noted that the programme on social development was the subject of an in-depth evaluation in 1994 (E/AC.51/1994/2), with a triennial review in 1997 (E/AC.51/1997/5). The preparation of the *Report on the World Social Situation*, which was formerly assigned to subprogramme 7.4, is continued as a distinct activity and is reviewed in para. 21 below.

2. *Report on the World Social Situation*

21. A comprehensive assessment of global trends and an analysis of their implications for social development can be found in the *Report on the World Social Situation*, which is published every four years. The primary audience for the *Report* is the Commission for Social Development, although it is also presented to the General Assembly. The *Report* is more neutral in its treatment of possible policy options than other reports designed to highlight and promote particular policies. Regarding the Report's use of statistics and the methodology followed by its authors, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), in its 1997 review of United Nations social "flagship" reports, noted that the *Report* is less willing to play with figures than is the case with either the *Human Development Report* or the *World Development Report*. The *Report on the World Social Situation* avoids using composite indices and one of the reasons for publishing it only every four years is the decision to rely on reported data, which in the social field arrive

many years late, rather than on projections, which form the primary basis for yearly reports. The *Report* is intended to generate further ideas as well as actions. The 1993 edition of the *Report* and its addendum were the basic reports used by the Commission for Social Development during its review of the world social situation in that year. In 1993, on the same issue, there were a large number of explicit references to the *Report* during the debate of the Third Committee of the General Assembly. In contrast, these two bodies did not refer to the 1997 edition of the *Report* during their meetings that year. In its above-mentioned 1997 review, UNRISD observed that on almost every issue covered in the *Report*, one could go to another United Nations report and find much more detailed information. This did not mean, in principle, that the *Report* should be considered redundant, because it is meant to fulfil a specific function, that of Surveying social trends, for a specific audience, the Commission for Social Development. The review concluded that, in order to remain relevant to the work of the Commission and build on its strengths, neutrality and sound methodology, the *Report* must identify and discuss emerging social issues and trends, including covering topics that are inherently controversial. UNRISD stressed that the *Report* should be allowed to become a forward-looking rather than a review publication. The 2000 edition of the Report is focused on issues of equity; it seeks to identify and document changes that are significant in the long term.

C. Public administration, finance and development

22. During the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis expanded its work on research and analysis on microeconomic issues. This work included studies relating to employment, technology and the use of market-based mechanisms both to meet environmental objectives and to provide public services.[4] The Department also undertook a number of activities that reflected the increasing interrelationship between the political, security and development aspects of the organization's work, including assessing the impact of sanctions on third parties and analysing the issues of coercive economic measures.[5] This work has continued under the present subprogramme 28.8, along with work related to the programme in public administration and finance.

1. United Nations programme in public administration and finance

23. The United Nations programme in public administration and finance, which, since the 1950s, has sought to meet the needs of developing countries in improving their administrative and financial systems for development, has been strengthened by the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/225 of 19 April 1996. The Assembly considered that the rapid pace and interdependence of global, political, social and economic developments, and their implications for all countries highlighted the need for improved efficiency and effective public institutions, administrative procedures and sound financial management, taking into account the diversity of experiences in public administrative systems. In 1997, the Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance recommended that the programme focus on the implementation of resolution 50/225 and that, to this end, it should serve as a hub and forum for the global exchange of information on policies, best practices and methods and provide advisory services to interested Governments. The clearing house function recommended by the Meeting of Experts is being developed under subprogramme 28.8. In addition to the work of the Meeting of Experts, the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters is also carried out under subprogramme 28.8.

24. Since 1996, cooperation has been initiated and strengthened with numerous organizations. Under subprogramme 28.8 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has collaborated on several initiatives, one of which, the administration and cost of elections project, carried out in cooperation with two other organizations, set up the first global information database on alternatives in election administration — its web site is coordinated by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. In addition, the development of an on-line network on public administration and finance, the dissemination of information and the provision of technical assistance and the review and analysis of policy options with respect to a number of related issues, such as the interface of States and markets, the maintenance of social safety nets and the elaboration and implementation of fiscal policies, are all carried out under the subprogramme. The operational activities of

the subprogramme, that is, the advisory and training services delivered by interregional and technical advisers, have provided inputs to a number of its publications. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs considers that, although only a short time has passed since the reorganization of the Secretariat in 1997, it has already been proven that it is very useful to link the economic and the management issues of the public sector. The Department also considers that it has been proven effective to combine the more analytical-oriented capacity of the former Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis with the more technical assistance-oriented capacity of the former Department for Development Support and Management Services.

2. Linkages between political and economic issues and policies

25. The involvement of the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis in assessing the economic impact of sanctions arose from the recognition by the General Assembly, in resolution 47/120B of 20 September 1993, that, in the conditions of economic interdependence that existed at that time, the implementation of preventive or enforcement measures under Chapter VII of the Charter against any State continued to create special economic problems for certain other States. In resolution 50/51 of 11 December 1995, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, within existing resources, to make appropriate arrangements in the relevant parts of the Secretariat, in order to carry out, in a coordinated way, a number of functions related to the issue. The Assembly was interested, *inter alia*, in the development of a possible methodology for assessing the consequences actually incurred by third States as a result of sanctions. The summary of the deliberations and main findings of the ad hoc expert group convened in 1998 by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to consider the matter was welcomed by the General Assembly,[6] which requested, in resolution 54/107 of 9 December 1999, that the competent units within the Secretariat develop the adequate capacity and appropriate modalities, technical procedures and guidelines to continue to carry out the functions entrusted to the Secretariat by Assembly resolution 50/51. It should be noted that, during this period, the related substantive work and secretariat support at the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, and subsequently at the Department Economic and Social Affairs, was provided by one professional staff member. Future activities by the Department in this area, after intergovernmental agreement on a methodology and when requests for impact assessments are received, would involve data collection and analysis. A related set of issues, from a methodological point of view, concerns the relationship between disarmament and development, a matter which was examined in several issues of the *World Economic and Social Survey*. The General Assembly, in resolution 54/54 T of 1 December 1998, welcomed the establishment of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP and Department for Disarmament Affairs Steering Group set up to determine the short, medium and long-term programme priorities in this area.

26. The Department for Development Support and Management Services was more involved than the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis in post-conflict and rehabilitation activities, having implemented a number of projects to address the specific requirements of countries in crisis, which needed assistance in rebuilding government structures so that basic services could be provided or restored, and ensuring that an environment was created in which conflict could not resume.[7] The current work under subprogramme 28.8 in this area is a mix of analytical and operational activities, including participating in meetings coordinated by the Administrative Committee on Coordination on approaches and methodology for post-conflict rehabilitation, as well as implementing UNDP projects on the development of conflict analysis and conflict resolution capacity-building. In 1998, in its conclusions on the Department's revised medium-term plan, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly consider possible arrangements for the establishment of a programme and/or subprogramme in the medium-term plan on post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction as well as on the transition from relief to development (A/53/16, para. 174). Subsequently, in resolution 53/207 of 18 December 1998, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a preliminary report, in accordance with the existing mandates of the General Assembly, on possible arrangements for post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction, as well as on the transition from relief to development, maintaining the distinct nature of both

activities, for consideration by the relevant Main Committees of the General Assembly and intergovernmental bodies.

IV. Regional programmes

A. Economic Commission for Africa

27. At the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), economic and social policy analysis is carried out under subprogramme 14.1. Its work is organized around three themes of development: economic analysis and policy; trade and debt; and social policy and poverty analysis. Its general goal is to produce timely, appropriate and influential information and analysis. The analysis of social development is meant to influence African decision makers in the financial and political sectors. The 1999 *Economic Report on Africa*, using the theme "Challenges of poverty reduction and sustainable development in Africa", analysed the conditions needed to achieve the international development goal of reducing poverty by half by the year 2015. Work on trade and debt aims at assisting African countries to optimize their trade, financial and monetary relations within themselves and with non-African countries. Studies and working papers are prepared and meetings are organized, frequently at the ministerial level.

28. The two main recurrent reports prepared under the subprogramme are the biannual *Economic and Social Survey of Africa*, which analyses the latest economic and social trends and the factors influencing them, and the annual *Economic Report on Africa*, a much shorter publication than the *Survey*, that reviews the main trends in African economies during the year against the background of developments in the world economy. The *Report* is aimed at the ECA Conference of Ministers, the ministers of finance and the governors of central banks. The intended audience for the *Survey* belongs broadly to the groups of policy makers in the region and the specialized public, which the *Report* also intends to reach. In 1999 the *Report* was reoriented to undertake the analysis of African economies in a framework that benchmarks their performance against best practices in the region; new indices were developed for evaluating economic performance and sustainability. Participants at the thirty-third session of the Commission, in 1999, noted the qualitative leap which the *Report* of that year had made over earlier reports and appreciated the basic idea of using African best practices as the benchmark for the measurement of country efforts and comparison of their achievements; they observed, however, that there was need for further technical work as well as improvement on background data.[8] The ECA Conference of Ministers in ECA resolution 831 (XXXIII), requested the Executive Secretary to put at the disposal of member States an explanatory note on the methodology and technical approaches used to enable member States to study the findings of the *Economic Report on Africa* and the proposed economic performance indicators as well as to refine and internalize them in their assessments, analysis and policy-making.

29. *The African Women's Report* is prepared on a biennial basis under the subprogramme promoting the advancement of women. The *Report* is devoted to policy analysis and advocacy for gender awareness and to the promotion of public policies supportive of the advancement of women in Africa. Each edition of the *Report* focuses on a specific theme. The theme of the 1998 *Report* was "Post-conflict Reconstruction in Africa: A Gender Perspective". The Report's intended users are government policy makers, business leaders, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the academic community. ECA is the only organization in the region that issues this type of publication in the area of gender and development.

B. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

30. At the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the 1997 review of the Commission and its reform programme reconfirmed the multidisciplinary approach adopted in 1992. Regarding the ongoing guidance received by the Secretariat, the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives assists the Executive Secretary in drawing up proposals for the secretariat programme of work. The Economic and Social Council considered that the Advisory Committee needed to examine ways to enhance and improve its ability to advise the Commission. ESCAP noted that reform efforts should be pursued in the broader context of economic and social developments in the region and the Commission's ability to respond, in an adequate and timely manner, to emerging problems.[9]

31. Activities under subprogramme 15.2, Development research and policy analysis, address these concerns. The main publication in this area is the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*. The provision of advisory services and the organization of expert group meetings and workshops are important aspects of the work under the subprogramme. Several analytical and operational activities of subprogramme 15.2 apply to social development, such as the formulation of analytical tools for policy decisions. Activities on macroeconomic issues relating to least developed, landlocked and island developing countries are mainstreamed into the work of all ESCAP subprogrammes, overall coordination being carried out under subprogramme 15.2. Relevant analytical work is also carried out under other subprogrammes. One in particular, subprogramme 15.1, Regional economic cooperation, relates to the capacities of developing countries to participate more effectively in multilateral trade negotiations and subregional economic cooperation programmes. Subprogramme 15.3, Social development, is largely organized around the follow-up to the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and several other international plans of action. The Commission commended the role of ESCAP in providing technical assistance to governments in national capacity-building, particularly in social policy analysis and the development of comprehensive multisectoral strategies for poverty alleviation integrated within national development plans.[10]

32. The *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific* provides an assessment of the socio-economic performance of the region, with attention to alternative policy choices and the social development implications of economic trends. The *Survey*'s intended readers are the government officials of countries of the region who are directly involved in macroeconomic policy formulation and implementation and it is also disseminated to the specialized public and organizations working on these issues. It is the principal background document of the annual session of ESCAP. At the time of issuance of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, ESCAP intended to develop its capacity to forecast the major developments in the global and regional economy more accurately. It is noted that, well before the onset of the Asian financial crisis, ESCAP had commissioned country studies to identify the strengths, weaknesses and remedial actions required to improve financial sector management. The 1997 issue of the *Survey* highlighted the risk that had been introduced through the financial sector at that time.

C. Economic Commission for Europe

33. In the field of economic analysis, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) contributes, under its plan of action, to economic integration in the region by providing an international perspective for national policy makers and, when appropriate, facilitating the convergence of their policies. This activity, carried out under subprogramme 16.4, Economic analysis, results in the publication of a number of annual and occasional publications; the main annual report being the *Economic Survey of Europe*. In addition, policy debates on economic problems and policies of countries of the ECE region, based on issues discussed in the *Survey*, are organized at venues such as the annual spring seminar, which takes place before the annual meeting of the Commission, and at several intergovernmental committees of ECE where economic analysis serves as a background to sectoral analysis. In collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and also under subprogramme 16.4, ECE pursues population activities that will be reviewed in the in-depth evaluation prepared for the 2001 session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

34. In 1998, following a decision of the Commission, the *Economic Survey of Europe* became an annual volume of three issues published at the beginning of the second, third and fourth quarters. The first issue focuses on economic developments in the region in the past and coming year, with emphasis on the economies in transition and selected aspects of the transition process. The second issue contains a brief mid-year update on the economies of the region and addresses selected topics. The third issue includes the papers presented to the ECE spring seminar, and replaces the *Economic Bulletin for Europe*. The *Survey*'s intended users are economists and policy makers working in national administrations and international organizations and the academic community. The importance of the academic community in policy-making was revealed by the 1996 readership survey of professional economists on the mailing lists of the *Survey* and the *Bulletin*. Three quarters of those responding to the readership survey served as advisers to their own governments; 80 per cent of the respondents found the publications

"essential" or "very useful"; more than 90 per cent stated that they found in the publications information that they could not find elsewhere.

D. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

35. In 1996, in the context of the reform of the United Nations and its impact on the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Commission was defined as a centre for collaboration with member States in a comprehensive analysis of development processes geared to the design, monitoring and evaluation of public policies that would provide the related operational services. At the 1996 meeting of the ad hoc working group established by the Commission to define ECLAC priorities, the delegations concurred with the proposal that the programme of work should pay special heed to the social dimension in all subject areas.[11]

36. The results of analysis of the overall economic and social trends in the region and on the economic policies and situations of specific countries are published annually in the *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean* and the *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean*. These publications are prepared under subprogramme 17.4, Macroeconomic equilibria, investment and financing. The *Preliminary Overview*, published at the end of each year, presents a comprehensive evaluation of the economic situation for the countries of the region during the current year; the 1998 edition included, for the first time, projections for the following year. The *Survey* is released at the end of the third quarter; its first chapter, the summary, is released a few months earlier. The summary offers an evaluation of the economic situation during the first six months of the year and presents annual forecasts for the principal indicators; it is widely distributed. In addition to the numerous statistical tables included in all the publications, a statistical annex in electronic form, one CD-ROM in 1999, is attached to the *Survey*; the annex provides access to over 350 tables, including several tables presented in a 10-year time series, at regional and country levels, and permits further data processing by users. Data and findings presented in these publications are well covered by the media. The readership survey carried out in 1998 indicates that the *Survey* is primarily used by academics and researchers, businessmen and government officials. Regarding ECLAC's programme of work, it should be noted that economic projections are prepared in two different divisions. In other regions, economic projections are prepared by only one unit, the unit responsible for analysing overall economic and social trends, which appears to be a more efficient arrangement.

37. In the area of social development, within the context of moderate economic recovery, ECLAC's research focused on policies that might contribute to the struggle to overcome conditions of poverty and social inequity. The main vehicle for the analysis of social development in the region is the *Social Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean*, prepared annually under subprogramme 17.5, Social development and social equity, in collaboration with other international organizations, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Government officials, academics and researchers make up two thirds of its readership. The *Panorama* is usually presented and used as a background document at several expert group meetings in the region.

38. In the area of regional integration and cooperation, ECLAC is assisting Governments in the analysis of conceptual as well as practical issues arising from the regional integration process. ECLAC also collaborates with the countries in the region in the development of policies designed to strengthen the technological dimension of production activities, increase competitiveness and stimulate entrepreneurial development.

39. In the area of administrative management, which is included under subprogramme 17.6, ECLAC aims at facilitating the development of an analytical framework available to the countries of the region, and, at the request of governments, at providing technical assistance for improving the design of public policies. Using research done under other programme areas of the Commission, it is the only subprogramme of all regional commissions that corresponds to the global programme addressing these issues.

E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

40. At the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the objectives under subprogramme 18.3, Economic development and

global changes, are, *inter alia*, to expand understanding of economic development and to strengthen the capacity of member States to implement economic reform policies. This subprogramme prepares the *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region*; it also addresses trade-related issues. The *Survey* is conceived as a multidisciplinary publication receiving contributions from several parts of the Commission. The *Survey* presents a comprehensive analysis of the major socio-economic developments in the region; one of its chapters treats different issues of social development. After the addition of a new agenda item at the Commission's session on issues of importance to the region, a second volume of the *Survey*, part II, has been issued since 1995 to address these issues. The *Survey*'s intended users are policy makers, officials in national administrations and researchers. In conjunction with the *Survey*, a brief document, the *Preliminary overview of socio-economic developments in the ESCWA region*, was introduced in 1996 to supplement the assessment of the region's economic performance at the end of each year with a broad outlook for the following year. ESCWA is the only organization in the region that provides such a forecast, offering estimates not significantly different from the final data presented in the *Survey*, in the second quarter of the following year. Data and analytical studies on issues such as poverty, issues emanating from follow-up to the global conferences and on the impact of world economic arrangements relevant to economic and social policy analysis are prepared and published under other ESCWA subprogrammes. The *Survey* and the *Preliminary Overview* are launched at press conferences and are widely quoted by the press in the region.

V. Common issues of programme implementation

A. Complementarity of analytical and operational activities

41. In the conclusion to its recent review of the commissions, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, stressed that they fulfil norm-setting, dissemination and analytical functions as well as undertake operational activities that are complementary and mutually reinforcing. At Headquarters, the establishment of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has created an interface between global policies and national action and between research, policy and operational activities. For example, its subprogramme 28.3, Social policy and development, provides advisory services to governments to implement further international instruments related to social policies and planning and to assist them in analytical assessment, diagnostic studies and evaluations of their current social situations. For the biennium 1998-1999, more than 40 per cent of planned outputs were related to technical cooperation. The knowledge and experience accumulated through this activity feeds back into the analysis of current developments carried out at Headquarters.

42. Subprogramme 28.7, Global development trends, issues and policies, is associated with Project LINK, an international economic research network carrying out studies on short-term projections of the world economy. With inputs from the national LINK centres and information available within the United Nations system, a world economic forecast is prepared twice a year. The LINK national econometric models are developed independently by national experts relying on national statistics. In the fall of 1999, at a meeting of Project LINK, more than half of the 50 forecasts submitted by the national centres came from developing countries or countries with economies in transition. Recently, under the auspices of subprogramme 28.7, requirements to strengthen the capacity of policy makers and researchers in low income countries in the area of policy modelling at the national level was investigated. Beyond this involvement with partners outside the Organization at a technical level, the activities under the subprogramme, which is expected to contribute to economic policy-making at the national and international levels, does not involve work that provides familiarity with country-specific situations. This is in contrast to subprogrammes 28.3 and 28.8, under which advisory services are provided (see paras. 23-24 and 41 above). In particular, work relevant to economic issues is carried out under subprogramme 28.3, where advisory services cover, *inter alia*, socio-economic policy formulation and implementation, structural adjustment policies and the operationalization of global policies on social and economic development. Although a relatively large number of economists are assigned to the work of subprogramme 28.3, institutional

interactions between subprogramme 28.7 and the Socio-Economic Policy and Development Management Branch of subprogramme 28.3, which provides advisory services, are limited. There is no joint participation in the analysis of developments in national economies and in needs assessment missions.

B. Coordinated action within the Secretariat

43. The need for an integrated approach to issues and coordinated action is a theme that appears in nearly all resolutions of intergovernmental bodies. At the Department for Economic and Social Affairs, officers consulted by the Central Evaluation Unit stated that the collaboration between programme areas has improved since the establishment of the Department. For example, draft reports are routinely circulated to ensure consistency of analysis and data throughout the Department. A few inter-divisional thematic groups were set up on the issues of poverty, finance and gender. However, the potential for joint activities was not fully realized. At ESCAP, despite the significant decrease in extrabudgetary resources during the last 10 years, the funding policy of one donor from 1994 to 1997 actually enhanced the inter-divisional implementation of activities through the funding of multi-year large-scale (umbrella) projects. Apart from the implementation of inter-divisional umbrella projects, examples of collaborative inter-divisional efforts are sporadic, though encouraged. At ECLAC, inter-divisional collaboration is more extensive. For example, the assessment by ECLAC, between 1997 and 1999, of the impact of the economic reforms introduced in the region, conducted in collaboration with research centres and national authorities in nine countries and coordinated with organizations such as the Interamerican Development Bank and the World Bank, involved the participation of several programme areas and the regional offices of ECLAC. In order to widen the scope of the analysis, in terms of both the links between micro and macroeconomics and the links between economic policies and social evolution, cooperation between different programme areas took place through the implementation of multidisciplinary research projects. The coordination of Secretariat work on gender issues is the subject of special efforts, which will be reviewed in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the advancement of women programme.

44. The collaboration between different parts of the Secretariat has been the subject of intergovernmental concern. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, stressed that linking the activities of the regional commissions more effectively with the overall activities of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors should be pursued vigorously and that the undertaking of joint exercises should be encouraged between the secretariat of each commission, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNCTAD. For the first time, in 1996, the authors of the United Nations economic surveys met to learn from each other's experiences in generating the reports. In two commissions, the authors told the Central Evaluation Unit that there had been greater coordination in the preparation of the surveys, partly as the result of the meeting. Personal interaction between staff at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the commissions had been useful from the onset of the financial crisis in 1997 as they tried to deepen their common understanding of the situation as it increasingly took on the dimensions of a global crisis. Unfortunately, outside this informal network, exchanges have been limited. The agreement, at the 1996 meeting, to establish a consolidated inventory of research studies from each of the regions and make it available to all has not been realized. When the contents of the annual surveys are thought out, a call for ideas and contributions is not sent to other parts of the Secretariat and experts outside the Organization, as is the case with the UNCTAD *World Investment Report* and other comparable reports. In its comments to a draft of the present report, ESCAP stated that a consistent United Nations view on global economic developments is of critical importance and that resources should be made available for more systematic collaboration between the regional commissions, UNCTAD and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs prior to the preparation of the global and regional economic and social surveys. This could take the form of an informal meeting between the main authors of the surveys.

45. In resolution 1998/46, the Economic and Social Council found it desirable to encourage better two-way flow of information on activities of the regional commissions, including through the simultaneous launching of the economic and social surveys. Joint launching might be difficult to organize for several reasons, including the fact that the calendar for the publication of each survey varies. The improved flow

of information recommended by the Council could take place in a round-table or panel format for the benefit of delegates, similar to the practice that has been developed in recent years at the Second Committee of the General Assembly. The existing practice of cross-reference, in the form of citation or boxed-text, to analysis presented in other reports could be expanded.

46. In 1997, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNCTAD undertook a review of their activities in the macroeconomic area in order to strengthen their cooperation. A number of measures were agreed upon, including the issuance of a joint report on the world economic situation and prospects at the end of each year, replacing the former part I of the *World Economic and Social Survey*. The report on prospects for the year 2000 was not available at the end of 1999. In response to a request of the General Assembly in its resolution 53/172 of 15 December 1998, the Secretary-General submitted to the Assembly, at its fifty-fourth session, a report on the financial crisis and its impact on growth and development, which used the cooperative efforts of various components of the Secretariat and also benefited from ongoing cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions.[12] UNCTAD submitted a separate report on the same subject. At UNCTAD, the Division involved in this cooperative effort with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in its comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, stated that considerable difficulties were experienced in integrating the output provided by each partner into a single unified text. In the meantime, collaboration between the Department and other United Nations organizations was developed. The International Labour Organization (ILO), in its comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, commended the unusually close collaboration of the Department during the preparation of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in 1999. UNESCO found its cooperation with the Department very useful and sees scope for future cooperation. The United Nations University, which participates in the work of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, believes that it could make increased contribution to the Department's subprogramme activities reviewed in the present report through its policy-oriented research work.

47. The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, established by the Secretary-General in 1997 as part of his programme for reform, aims, as do the other executive committees, to reduce duplication of effort and facilitate greater complementarity and coherence between each unit of the Organization. Several policy and advocacy papers on issues such as the international financial architecture, the debt problems of developing countries and the social dimensions of macroeconomic policy resulted from collaboration between the Secretariat, including the regional commissions, and the organizations of the United Nations system in the economic and social sectors. The regional commissions are also pursuing collaboration on a range of issues. For example, the directors in charge of transport in the five regional commissions met in Cairo in December 1999 to review developments in the transport sector in the respective regions and possibilities for cooperation among the commissions in this sector.

C. Focused research and analysis

48. In planning the work of several programmes reviewed above, focus was placed on fewer activities. In research and analytical work, the focus on one set of specific issues frequently led to increased expertise and collaboration with national authorities. At ECLAC, a small unit, the Development Finance Unit, over a 10-year period, conducted studies, bridging macroeconomics and social development issues, on reforms of pension and public health programmes in the region. The results of the studies contributed to policy reforms by countries in the region. The Unit is also providing technical and policy advice, at the invitation of national authorities, during discussions with the Bretton Woods institutions on national reforms. In recent years, the annual economic surveys have tended to focus on one main topic. This is the case with the ECE *Survey*, which emphasized the analysis of transition economies in the early 1990s and is now shifting towards the problems of the economies of south-eastern Europe (see para. 34 above). The interest in the new methodological approach by the ECA *Economic Report* and the focus on specific themes by the *Economic Report* and the *African Women's Report* were noted in paragraphs 28 and 29 above. It is observed that the shift from surveys that cover a range of topics in broad overview or summary form to more focused analysis, with a different topic every year, generally requires additional expertise, as was the case for the 1999 edition of the *World Economic and Social Survey*.

49. This additional expertise is frequently obtained through extensive consultations with experts in governments and research institutions, a well-established process in several commissions. For example, in 1997 at ESCAP, one publication, entitled *Asia and the Pacific into the Twenty-first Century: Prospects for Social Development*, was prepared through the collective efforts of secretariat staff and a number of consultants and referees, some of them providing their services without charge. A summary of the study was presented to the Commission which commended the secretariat on the high quality of the documentation and endorsed the findings therein.[13] In its comments to a draft of the present report, ESCAP stated that this kind of collaboration is the norm in virtually all extrabudgetary activities involving the production of a publication. In some regions, professional associations provide a good interface with the professional community, however, the constitution of a representative and reputable network of experts has not been achieved everywhere.

D. Quality of data

50. The 1993 revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the latest edition of the IMF *Balance of Payments Manual* have greatly improved government reporting. However, as noted in the *World Economic and Social Survey, 1999*, inconsistency of coverage, definitions and data-collection methods among reporting countries as well as late, incomplete or non-reported data have become major analytical handicaps when comparisons are made between countries or groupings of countries. As a result, there are serious gaps in international databases. There are also many instances of inconsistencies between data disseminated at the international level, which were documented in a recent report of the Secretary-General on the subject (E/1999/11). Among several Secretariat initiatives, ECLAC is presently enhancing its capacity to gather and analyse monthly and quarterly indicators on economic activity. Indicators used to monitor social development are the most problematic. In their comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, officers in the regional commissions stated that the Secretariat should move from revisiting theoretical issues to forming a consensus on the practical measures needed to improve their monitoring functions. Such initiatives have been taken in the recent past. For example, in 1997 the Statistical Commission entrusted the development of international standards for the definition of poverty to an expert group, comprising country experts and experts from international bodies, with ECLAC acting as its secretariat.[14] Regarding gender issues, experts meeting in Santiago at the end of 1999 discussed the question of gender indicators and their utilization in policy-making. They concluded that, although important progress had been made in this area during the last 10 years, a number of gaps in available information and in its dissemination remained. Among the difficulties identified in the ECLAC region were the lack of information for the integration of the gender perspective in macroeconomic policies and the fact that desegregation of data by gender is not generalized.

E. Dissemination of the results of research and analysis

1. Reaching government representatives

51. The concern of the General Assembly regarding the need for greater use of background documents in the Second Committee was noted in paragraph 12 above. There are indications of use of such documents by the regional commissions, although explicit references to background documents, such as the regional economic and social surveys, are occasional; there are one or two references during a session, sometimes none. It may be that the structure of the sessions and the available time do not allow for substantive discussion of emerging topics and issues, as commented upon by government representatives to the 1999 session of the ESCAP, in response to a survey by the secretariat. In the Agenda for Development, it was stated that the capacity of the United Nations and its various bodies to undertake analytical and policy-oriented work in the economic and social fields must be fully utilized and it was recommended that the General Assembly consider the use of innovative mechanisms, such as panel discussions with delegations and interactive debates with the active participation of Secretariat and agency representatives as well as outside experts.[15] Since that time, the Bureau of the Second Committee, with the support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, has increased the number of such panels. These events are well attended by delegates who consider they provide them with useful information. The main findings of the economic and social surveys are, in general, presented to delegations through short briefings. A more

elaborate presentation is the annual spring seminar at Economic Commission for Europe, where the issues examined in the ECE *Survey* are discussed. At ECA, the *Economic Report* is usually the subject of a ministerial policy debate at the biennial sessions of the Conference of African Ministers responsible for economic and social development and, in inter-sessional years, it is the subject of policy debate at the Ministerial follow-up to the Conference. In New York, the 1999 presentation of the *World Economic and Social Survey* included discussion of specific issues by different authors of the *Survey*. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs is also making information available on the Internet (see para. 15 above). Newsletters, comparable to the IMF *Survey* written with the non-specialist in mind are well-received. *ECLAC Notes*, the newsletter prepared by the Information Services Unit of ECLAC, summarizes the main findings and conclusions of most recent relevant studies, while institutional information is kept to a minimum. Over 7,000 copies are distributed in the region to a large number of policy makers and to the specialized public.

2. Dissemination by the media

52. In the Agenda for Development (General Assembly resolution 51/240, annex, para. 272 (d)), it was stressed that any Secretariat reform in the economic and social fields should preserve and promote the independence, intellectual diversity and visibility of the United Nations in policy analysis. During the 1990s, the potential for increased visibility of the United Nations in policy analysis in the economic and social fields was actively explored by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions, in collaboration with the Department of Public Information. Press conferences for launching the economic and social surveys have been organized; information officers and staff of the substantive programmes maintain contacts with journalists. For example, for the launching of the 1998 *World Economic and Social Survey*, the Department of Public Information prepared a press summary of the *Survey* for distribution to correspondents at Headquarters and to an international list of writers on business and economics. Interviews with the main author of the *Survey* for BBC-TV's *World Business Report* and the CNN-Financial Network were aired in a large number of countries. At ECE, the authors of the *Economic Survey of Europe* have given a large number of interviews on radio and television and the *Survey* receives wide press coverage. At ESCAP, in 1999, for the launching of the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*, in addition to the press conference organized in Bangkok by the United Nations Information Service before the meeting of the Commission, the United Nations information centres organized press briefings in as many as 14 locations throughout the region, at which presentations were made by national experts; the total cost of these briefings is estimated at $4,000. At ESCAP, feedback on press coverage of the regional economic survey shows that broad conclusions on global trends as well as findings of interest to specific countries are usually reflected in the national press. Regional surveys, such as the *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean*, present additional information useful to the media (see para. 36 above). Regarding the *World Economic and Social Survey*, informal feedback indicates coverage by a number of important press organs. It is also noted that news agencies increasingly file stories with mention of the *Survey* (see table 3 below). Secretariat staff commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that promotion efforts by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Public Information were a factor in this increase; attention given by the public to analysis of international economic developments that have impact on local economies played a role as well.

Table 3
Wire service stories

Referring to: *A. The World Economic and Social Survey*	*1987*[a]	*1996*	*1998*
Number of stories	1	11	20

Referring to: *B. The World Economic and Social Survey and comparators (1998 editions)*	*Number of stories*
World Economic and Social Survey	20
Trade and Development Report (UNCTAD)	9
Human Development Report (UNDP)	41
World Development Report (World Bank)	54

Source: NEXIS, an electronic database containing the wire-service stories of most news agencies worldwide.

[a] In 1987 the publication was entitled *World Economic Survey*.

53. Factors limiting wider coverage were also pointed out. Most of the surveys are perceived as background documents from which important findings do not emerge clearly. To make analyses more useful to the media, a number of companion documents, such as press summary and fact sheets, need to be prepared. Information officers in the regional commissions believe that press coverage could extend beyond the time of launching the surveys if timely updates reflecting new developments were available. Due to the limited resources available for their promotion, it is not possible to effectively launch these publications every year. The economic and social surveys are not advocacy tools, such as the global *Human Development Report*, which continues to be a successful key media and advocacy tool and benefits from the resources of the sponsoring organization, ensuring effective publicity. For example, in 1997, footage provided by the UNDP television team to programme countries for the launch of the *Human Development Report* ran in 60 countries, some of which were dubbed in local languages. Published by a commercial publisher, the *Human Development Report* print-run exceeds 100,000 copies, with about a third of it bought back for free distribution. The 1998 *World Economic and Social Survey* print-run was 7,200 copies, with about half of it set aside for free distribution. Other ways of disseminating information may help compensate for these limitations. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs web site could be used more actively to inform the international media of new publications. Networks of interested individuals who are members of associations such as the national United Nations Associations could be established to support and complement the promotional work of the United Nations information centres.

3. Reaching the professional community: development economists

54. Statistics on sales of the *World Economic and Social Survey* indicates the continued interest of the specialized public (see table 5, para. 58, below). Feedback from this public is not collected systematically. The feedback obtained by the United Nations University Press on two recent publications on the 1997-1998 financial crisis, edited by staff of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, indicated that the audience for these publications included a mix of scholars and researchers in international affairs and political science, as well as mid-level decision makers in international and other organizations, sometimes characterized as specialists in development economics. Staff of the regional commissions, who are more involved in technical assistance, are in a better position to assess interest in their publications, although the nature of the feedback varies. For example, at ECA, feedback is limited to the reactions of the delegates during the meetings of the Commission. At ECLAC and ECE, analysis presented in the publications is discussed in meetings and seminars attended by the professional community.

55. Staff of the regional commissions, who were interviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit commented that reaching the professional community was central to ensuring the visibility of analysis disseminated by the Secretariat. Professional seminars, which are also attended well by government decision makers, provide the opportunity to discuss findings and policy options in-depth. Furthermore, researchers in this area act frequently as advisers to their own governments (see para. 34 above). Professionals belonging to this broad group of development economists and policy analysts working in international relations, when interviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit, commented that summaries in the press did not help them to determine whether they might be interested in the analysis contained in the economic and social surveys. They stated that presentations at seminars are now a common practice for comparable reports, but not well established for United Nations surveys. In its comments to the Unit, ECE stated that staff accepted invitations to attend a wide range of conferences and meetings organized by academics, for example, by the European forecasting institutes. All of this activity both fed into the work of the secretariat of the Commission and led to a wider dissemination of the *Survey* and other outputs of the secretariat. As an example of outreach to the professional community by ECA, a special edition of the *Journal of African Economies*, published by Oxford University in December 1999, was devoted to ECA policy papers on the issue of development aid in Africa.

56. In recent years, staff in different parts of the Secretariat have been encouraged to participate in the activities of the professional community outside the United Nations. However, an examination of the Economic Literature Database, an index authors and publications cited in professional journals, at the end of 1999, revealed that most staff members whose writings

in professional publications were regularly cited in the Database before joining the United Nations were no longer cited afterwards. A few economists who continued to contribute are frequently cited. The lack of time for writing papers and the anonymity of writing at the United Nations are the most common reasons given to explain this lack of visibility. It should also be noted that one prerequisite for participation in professional meetings and publications is adherence to quality standards of the professional community; papers submitted for meetings go through a rigorous selection process. The referee system used in professional circles is rarely followed at the United Nations, and even less stringent quality control arrangements, such as internal peer reviews, are not the common practice. At ECLAC, the editor of the *CEPAL Review* has adopted a referee system for publishing papers submitted to the *Review*. Table 4 below gives an indication of the visibility achieved by the *Review* in professional circles, attributed in large part to the conception of the *Review* and the quality of its contents. At ESCAP, an expert group meeting provides comments on the *Economic and Social Survey* in draft form, and papers submitted for publication in the *Asia-Pacific Development Journal* are normally given to referees. ESCAP staff told the Central Evaluation Unit that a referee process is desirable, but that it relies entirely upon the good-will and availability of the referees. ECE staff stated that, based on ECE experience, the referee system is useful in the case of specialized studies. Regarding the economic analysis of current developments, where timeliness is a factor, periodic reviews by academics of work done and in progress is the best form of quality control. Regarding the promotion of sales publications (see para. 59 below), in its comments on a draft of the present report, the Department of Public Information forwarded the idea that testimonials from specialists in academic and research institutions might be gained from prominent persons. Such testimonials, quoted in the promotional literature, would be of great value in enhancing the saleability, and therefore the overall dissemination, of the publications.

Table 4
Citations of publications and articles in professional literature

A. Programme publications and comparators

Title	*Number of citations*
World Economic and Social Survey (DESA)[a]	3
United Nations regional surveys	9
Trade and Development Report (UNCTAD)	30
Human Development Report (UNDP)	26
World Development Report (World Bank)	57

B. Articles published in the CEPAL Review and by individual staff members

	Number of citations
CEPAL Review (ECLAC)	546
Individual staff members[b]	
Staff member #1	81
Staff member #2	50

Source: *Economic Literature Database*, 1969-1999.

[a] Including citations under the former title *World Economic Survey*.

[b] Staff members with the highest number of citations who continued to contribute to professional journals after joining the United Nations.

4. Free distribution and sales

57. Publications are distributed using three channels: official distribution, sales and free distribution by the substantive departments. The latter presently takes two forms: the mailing of printed material and electronic dissemination. Problems in the distribution of printed materials already identified in the previous in-depth evaluation in this area have not changed significantly. Efforts have been made to rationalize and update mailing lists, usually following requests from Member States to do so. For example, at ECLAC, the secretariat was asked to revise and update the list of recipients of its publications in order to disseminate the outputs of the work programme more effectively. Unfortunately, throughout the Secretariat, after revision of the lists, insufficient attention is given to their maintenance. Very few units operate like the Information Services Unit of ECLAC, which considers that maintaining and developing further distribution lists is an ongoing activity and acts accordingly.

58. Electronic dissemination in the economic and social fields developed considerably in recent years. In June 1998, 11,000 users accessed the ESCAP web site; in October 1999, there were 78,000 visitors to the site. Available statistics show a comparable increase at ECE and ECLAC. Statistics available for the Headquarters sites show that, between different areas of work of the Secretariat, the economic and social affairs site was, early 1999, consulted seven times more than the next most highly requested topical area, international law. A few initiatives have been launched that take the new possibilities offered by electronic communication into account. For example, ESCAP is developing a virtual conference site on the issue of environment and economic policy making. The site is conceived as a resource centre as well as a public forum to exchange ideas and good practices. The Commission commended the emphasis placed in the proposed programme of work on increasing the dissemination of information through ESCAP web sites and databases.[16] Adequate resources are not always allocated for the development and maintenance of web sites. At ESCAP, the function of web master is carried out by one officer in a substantive division, on a voluntary basis. Work on the web site pages is carried out over and above the concerned officer's official job description. In contrast, at ECLAC, two full time officers are responsible for functions that include: definition of architecture, design and graphic layout to facilitate user access and navigation; promotion of the Internet site; creation of an Intranet site understood as an experimental space to test new products and services; technical assistance to transfer the experience and knowledge to governments and regional institutions.

Table 5
United Nations publications: statistics on sales

Title	*Print-run*	*Number of copies sold*[a]
World Economic and Social Survey, 1998	7 220	2 604
Report of the World Social Situation, 1997	6 175	1 197
Trade and Development Report, 1998	11 760	1 201
Economic and Social Survey of Africa, 1995-1996[b]	2 500	210
Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1998	2 800	645
Economic Survey of Europe, 1998[c]	4 085	1 252
Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1998	2 090	873
Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA region, 1997-1998	611	160

Source: United Nations publications database.
[a] Sales as of 31 October 1999.
[b] Latest statistics available.
[c] For each of the three annual volumes.

59. In addition to issues that concern most United Nations publications (see A/52/685), the timeliness of publication was identified as a major limiting factor for the promotion of sales of the economic and social surveys. For example, although it would be possible to finalize the *World Economic and Social Survey* for sale by mid-year, to coincide with the opening of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, the *Survey* is put on the market much later, when many prospective buyers are no longer interested in the prospects of a year that has largely gone by. Another limiting factor is that the pricing is not adapted to markets in the developing countries, which explains, in part, the relatively lower sales figures of regional surveys (see table 5 above). In this regard, it should be noted that the English edition of the 1998 *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean* represented 87 per cent of sales, while the Spanish edition, aimed primarily at the Latin American market, represented only 13 per cent. Some regional commissions have explored the possibility of joint publications with regional publishers, which provide lower cost publications and access to a local network

of distribution. In one case, United Nations publications at Headquarters entered into contract with one local publisher to publish the *World Economic and Social Survey* and place it on the market, where United Nations publications have not sold well, at one quarter of the United Nations price. Several hundred copies of the local edition were sold and the publisher intends to increase the print-run. Such initiatives significantly increase the dissemination of information, which is the primary purpose of United Nations publications. In its comments to a draft of the present report, the Department of Public Information stated that a policy is in place to extend distribution through local and language editions in markets that cannot be adequately served by direct sales activities. However, in its comments, ESCAP stated that associating commercial publishers with ESCAP publications would involve a radical change in the rules and procedures governing such matters at the United Nations. The authors of the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific* stated that the one attempt they had made in the past failed because of the time taken by Headquarters in arriving at a decision and owing to the stringent conditions laid down for the purpose.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

60. **In the 1989 evaluation report on the global programme on development issues and policies (E/AC. 51/1989/4, paras. 91-102), it was concluded, *inter alia*, that the programme's analyses were generally of good quality, but that their dissemination through departmental mailing lists was poor and that the use made of the programme's publications by other organizations of the United Nations system, professional economists and the press was less than desirable. The prior evaluation also raised issues concerning the global programme's contributions to intergovernmental debate and its intergovernmental guidance. The conclusions and recommendations of the prior evaluation constitute a set of benchmarks against which progress can be assessed.**

61. **Ten years later, the analyses prepared at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions under the several subprogrammes reviewed remained of good quality, and were sometimes of a higher calibre. A number of activities carried out under the subprogrammes reviewed provided effective support to intergovernmental processes that led to the agreements reached during the major United Nations conferences and meetings of the 1990s. However, the recurrent publications under these subprogrammes, mainly economic and social surveys, were not a major contribution to these processes, with the exception of those regional commissions where the surveys are the basis for policy debates, either during sessions of the intergovernmental bodies or at the national level. Changes were made to the presentation and scope of the recurrent publications of the global programme. More changes are needed in the way analysis is presented and communicated to government representatives. The contents and presentation of recurrent publications of the regional commissions, where the main audience is most often in national ministries and institutions, were significantly reformulated.**

62. **Other conclusions of the 1989 in-depth evaluation are still valid. This refers, *inter alia*, to the lack of intergovernmental guidance for the global programme on development trends, issues and policies and the need for more effective arrangements to disseminate the publications and to reach the professional community. Exchange of information and collaboration between different parts of the Secretariat have improved, but need to be further developed. Efforts to increase the dissemination of analyses through the media have had positive results.**

63. **Regarding intergovernmental guidance, in the 1989 in-depth evaluation it was noted that there was no specialized intergovernmental body reviewing the programme of work on development issues and policies. The situation remains unchanged today, 10 years later: there is still no appropriate specialized intergovernmental body providing guidance on the programme planning aspects of the activities of subprogramme 28.7, Global development trends and issues. The subprogramme as proposed in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 was not reviewed by any specialized intergovernmental body. In a related matter, it is noted that, under subprogramme 28.7, substantive support is to be provided to the Committee on Development Policy, a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. The arrangements for formulating the**

programme of work of the Committee and its working methods were reviewed by the Council in 1998 (see paras. 18-19 above). The effectiveness of the Committee's new working methods will need to be assessed in 2003, in the context of the triennial review of implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee on Programme and Coordination on the present in-depth evaluation.

64. Since 1989, resources provided for this area of work of the Secretariat have remained relatively stable, with the exception of resources for subprogramme 28.7, Global development trends, issues and policies, at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, where the staffing level is 50 per cent lower now than it was 10 years ago, and of subprogramme 16.4, Economic analysis, at ECE, where the staffing level is 30 per cent lower. Considering the increased attention given by the United Nations to economic and financial matters, the Secretariat may need to examine possible measures to strengthen the capacity of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for economic and social data gathering and analysis and, if required, to make proposals to the relevant intergovernmental bodies as part of revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

65. The following recommendations are based on the findings presented in sections III, IV and V of the present report.

Recommendation 1
Contribution of the *World Economic and Social Survey* to intergovernmental processes

(a) The *World Economic and Social Survey* should be more concise, highlight action-oriented findings and present clear policy proposals based on them. The *Survey* issued in the year 2001 should incorporate an executive summary containing the findings and policy proposals of part II of the *Survey*;

(b) In liaison with other parts of the Secretariat, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should identify a wider range of government officials to whom the contents of the *Survey* would be of interest and should take the necessary steps to ensure that the *Survey*, in print or electronic version, either in its entirety or only the relevant sections, reaches them [see paras. 11-14 and 51 above].

Recommendation 2
Assessing long-term trends in the global economy

To facilitate intergovernmental discussion on policies conducive to long-term development, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should strengthen its analysis of long-term trends in the global economy using a variety of methodological approaches and it should further integrate this dimension into its reporting to intergovernmental bodies [see para. 16 above].

Recommendation 3
Linkages between political and economic issues and policies

After intergovernmental agreement on a methodology for assessing the impact of sanctions on third States, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Political Affairs should review the required activities and capacity needed within the Secretariat. The review should be the basis for proposals presented to the relevant intergovernmental bodies as part of the revision to the medium-term plan.

Recommendation 4
Analytical functions and operational activities at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

To correct the inadequate interaction between research and operational activities under subprogramme 28.7, Global development trends, issues and policies, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should plan a number of joint activities between the professional staff assigned under subprogramme 28.7 and those involved in technical assistance under subprogrammes 28.3 and 28.8. Resources permitting, appropriate activities could include joint participation in the analysis of developments in national economies and joint participation in needs assessment missions [see paras. 41-42 above].

Recommendation 5
Exchange of information on socio-economic development issues, trends and policies in the Secretariat

Resources permitting, standard procedures should be adopted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions to

enhance the exchange of information and ideas on socio-economic development issues. Appropriate procedures could include requests for inputs during the planning phase of the economic and social surveys, requests for comments on preliminary drafts and a regularly updated inventory of studies and working papers completed or in preparation in the different parts of the Secretariat. The effectiveness of such procedures should be periodically reviewed by the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs [see para. 44 above].

Recommendation 6
Informal network for a wider dissemination of the results of analytical work

The Secretariat should develop an informal network of experts to assist in disseminating United Nations economic and social analysis. Experts who contributed to the economic and social surveys or topical studies or who commented on preliminary drafts of the surveys should be requested to make brief presentations on specific findings of the surveys to national authorities and the press in their country of residence, and at professional meetings they attend [see paras. 52, 54, and 55 above].

Recommendation 7
Reaching the professional community

The Secretariat should endeavour to make a greater contribution to the world professional debate outside the United Nations on the issues of socio-economic development and, resources permitting, expand the good practices of a few Secretariat units, *inter alia*, by:

(a) Encouraging staff to participate in professional conferences and seminars and to make contributions to professional journals, with priority given to meetings and journals of interest to development economists and policy makers in governments;

(b) United Nations publications on economic and social development should be prepared using rigorous quality control arrangements; working papers, such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs discussion paper series, should be subject to a referee system similar to that used in the professional community prior to publication [see paras. 54-56 above].

Recommendation 8
Free distribution and sales

Arrangements for the dissemination of analysis prepared for distribution in print or in electronic form should be reviewed, so that, *inter alia*:

(a) Mailing lists for free distribution are systematically derived from major categories of users (e.g. research departments in central banks, focal points in governments, national economic and social research institutes, professional journals);

(b) Mailing lists are updated regularly;

(c) Adequate resources are allocated to the development and maintenance of web sites to enhance their usefulness;

(d) Recurrent publications are released, with due attention to the calendar of intergovernmental meetings, at a time of the year when their findings are still relevant to the interested public;

(e) Sales strategies, including entering into contracts with local publishers, serve the primary purpose of the United Nations publications, which is to increase the dissemination of the United Nations perspective on issues of socio-economic development;

(f) Formal and informal feedback is used to review the effectiveness of these arrangements at regular intervals [see paras. 53 and 57-59 above].

(*Signed*) Hans **Corell**
Under-Secretary-General
Overseer, Office of Internal Oversight Services

Notes

[1] General Assembly resolution 45/199, annex, para. 104.

[2] See *World Economic and Social Survey, 1997* (United Nations publication, Sales No.E.97.II.C.1), preamble.

[3] A/54/115, sect. III, para. 5, table.

[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 1* (A/50/1), para. 212.

[5] A/49/336, para. 118 (c).

[6] A/53/312.

[7] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 1* (A/51/1), para. 252.

[8] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 18* (E/1999/38), chap. III, paras. 159-160.

[9] Ibid., *1998, Supplement No. 20* (E/1998/40), chap. III, para. 106.

[10] Ibid., para. 92.

[11] E/1997/5, para. 17.

[12] A/54/471, para. 1.

[13] E/1998/40, para. 76.

[14] E/AC.51/1997/2, para. 53.

[15] General Assembly resolution 51/240, annex, paras. 234 and 247.

[16] E/1999/39, para. 293.

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Item 3 (d) of the provisional agenda*
Programme questions: evaluation

In-depth evaluation of the advancement of women programme

Note by the Secretary-General

In conformity with paragraph 5 (e) (i) of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, and with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 54/244 of 23 December 1999, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the advancement of women programme. The Secretary-General takes note of its findings and concurs with its recommendations.

* E/AC.51/2000/1.

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Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the advancement of women programme

Summary

The present report reviews the achievements and shortcomings of the United Nations advancement of women programme with respect to the following activities: (a) servicing of intergovernmental bodies and the Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; (b) monitoring of the Beijing Platform for Action, and of gender mainstreaming and the status of women in the Secretariat; (c) coordination; (d) outreach; and (e) gender advisory services.

Recommendations are made which aim to enhance the effectiveness of the reporting mechanism of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and efforts to promote its work; improve coordination within the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, and between the Division for the Advancement of Women and other United Nations programmes and entities; and enhance outreach efforts through more effective marketing and distribution of the publications of the Division for the Advancement of Women, improving the WomenWatch and the Division for the Advancement of Women web sites, encouraging the staff of the Division for the Advancement of Women to publish in professional journals, and improving collaboration with non-governmental organizations.

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I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-seventh session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) requested that an in-depth evaluation of the advancement of women programme be undertaken in 2000.[1] The present report focuses mainly on assessing the work of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Division for the Advancement of Women (subprogramme 28.2 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001). The outline of the report is based on the activities of the subprogramme as described in section 9.2 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/54/6/sect. 9 and Corr.1, pp. 28 to 33).

2. The standard procedures for an in-depth evaluation were followed: (a) initial consultations with the departments and offices involved; (b) collection of United Nations documents and reports, including available assessments (such as Joint Inspection Unit reports, reports of the meetings of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies); (c) structured interviews and consultations with staff members from the Office being evaluated, focal points from other United Nations programmes and entities involved in the advancement of women, government representatives and experts, and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from a list provided by the Division for the Advancement of Women. Systematic reviews of the professional literature, searches of the Lexis and Nexis databases and searches of various web sites were also undertaken.

3. Member States, through a series of four world conferences and their preparatory and follow-up activities, and the effects on national legislation and case law associated with the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, have made the United Nations programme on the advancement of women a centre of innovation. Civil society has shown great interest in the programme, and made it an important source of increased awareness of the issues it addresses. Among the indicators of this interest is the level of participation of NGOs in the programme's activities and the extent of world media coverage and of the use made of its Internet sites. Qualitative and quantitative information on this impact is included in the relevant parts of the present report since it provides the context within which the Secretariat activities being evaluated are conducted. It is not possible to demonstrate a causal relationship between this impact and the work of the Secretariat alone; the Secretariat does not work alone but in conjunction with Member States, other international agencies and NGOs, and it is this combined action which, in successful programmes, produces a demonstrable impact.

II. Institutional framework

4. The subprogramme on gender issues and advancement of women is implemented by the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and by the Division for the Advancement of Women. The Office of the Special Adviser, which consists of the Focal Point for Women and the Principal Social Affairs Officer on Gender Mainstreaming, is responsible for the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing in 1995, and all activities related to the advancement of women. The Special Adviser is supported by the Division for the Advancement of Women, to which she provides guidance and policy advice through its Director. The Special Adviser performs her leadership role concerning gender issues and advancement of women in the United Nations system and Member States through discussions with government representatives and ambassadors, the heads of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Commission on the Status of Women delegations and NGOs.

5. The Division for the Advancement of Women, in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, reports, through the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, to the Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs. It includes the Gender Analysis Section, the Gender Advisory Services Unit, the Women's Rights Unit and the Coordination and Outreach Unit. The Division's major functions are advising the Special Adviser in his or her capacity as coordinator of Gender Issues, preparing reports and other documentation, providing substantive services to various intergovernmental bodies, providing substantive and Secretariat service to CEDAW and the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE), support for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action,[2] and advisory services to developing countries.

6. The Gender Analysis Section is responsible for the analysis from a gender perspective of substantive areas of the implementation of the Platform for Action and for related reports, studies and expert group meetings in 8 of the 12 critical areas of concern contained in paragraph 44 of the Platform for Action.[3] Analytical studies and expert group meetings have dealt with a wide range of issues such as eradication of poverty, conflict resolution, macroeconomic policies, care provision to the elderly, gender dimensions of peacekeeping operations, gender-sensitive health policies and the situation of rural women.

7. The subprogramme's 2000-2001 authorized staffing table consists of a total of 42 posts: 1 ASG; 1 D-2; 3 D-1; 5 P-5; 10 P-4/3, 5 P-2/1; and 17 in the General Service category. In September 1999, an interregional adviser (L-3), funded under section 21 of the regular budget, was assigned to the Gender Advisory Services Unit of the Division for the Advancement of Women. The Office's appropriations for 1998-1999 were $7.4 million (regular budget) and $1.7 million (extrabudgetary resources).

8. The following funds, programmes and other entities within the United Nations system provide an overview of key actors in the field of advancement of women. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is an autonomous organization working in close association with UNDP. It has a network of 11 regional programme advisers, who work closely with NGOs, Governments and the Resident Coordinator system in their regions and convene United Nations inter-agency thematic groups to develop coordinated strategies among agencies and other donors. UNIFEM was designated by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as an executing agency on gender, population and development. Since 1995 UNIFEM has supported the follow-up activities to the Beijing Conference and implementation of the Beijing Declaration[4] and Platform for Action and projects in support of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. UNIFEM focuses its work on three thematic areas: supporting women's economic capacities and rights; "engendering" governance and leadership; and promoting women's human rights and the elimination of violence against women.

9. The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) is an autonomous body of the United Nations established in 1976. It's mandate is to serve as a vehicle to promote and undertake policy-oriented research and training programmes at the international level, to contribute to the advancement of women worldwide and to compile databases on available gender-specific information both within and outside the United Nations system. Since its inception, INSTRAW has been funded solely through voluntary contributions. In 1998-1999, several reports were issued on the financial situation of INSTRAW (see, for example, A/54/352). In paragraph 2 of its resolution 1999/54, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Board of Trustees of INSTRAW, to draw up a new structure and working method for the Institute. The revitalized INSTRAW intends to use new information technologies as a means of producing, managing and disseminating gender knowledge and information on critical issues and trends affecting women and men and their roles in development (see A/54/500). An essential part of the new Institute — the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS) project — will be a virtual workshop on gender, providing three core services: research and information; networking; and capacity-building. The GAINS project will be operational upon receipt of funding, which is currently being pursued.

10. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In the Economic and Social Council conclusions on the human rights of women (resolution 1998/12, sect. III), the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights were "requested to continue to prepare the joint annual work plan and strengthen cooperation and coordination in human rights activities, in particular (a) by collaborating in the writing of reports for the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights; (b) through sharing information systematically on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, its sessions and documentation of the Economic and Social Council ...; and (c) through capacity-building to implement agreed conclusions 1997/2" on gender mainstreaming (see E/CN.6/1999/2, para. 53). At its fiftieth session, the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1994/45, decided to appoint, for a three-year period, a Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

11. Each of the five regional commissions has a unit or other mechanism that serves as the focal point for gender issues within that commission. The focal points assist in the implementation of the Platform for Action through regional plans of action, providing inputs to various reports submitted to intergovernmental bodies, hosting and participating in conferences and meetings and initiating other projects to promote the advancement of women within their regions both independently and jointly. Prior to the Beijing Conference and the special session of the General Assembly on Beijing +5 (see paras. 41 and 46 below), each of the regional commissions organized regional preparatory conferences, which were well-attended and are providing input to the special session.

12. The gender in development programme of UNDP provides policy advice and supports the development of approaches and methods for improved partnerships, analysis, capacity-building and information systems on gender equality issues at headquarters and at the country level, including the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and commitments under the Convention. It supports country offices in their upstream policy dialogue with Governments in the areas of legislation, emergency response and poverty eradication. In December 1998, a mid-term review of the UNDP capacity-building support programme for gender mainstreaming identified the major constraints faced in effective gender mainstreaming and proposed four key issues to be considered during the next phase of the programme. Currently, the impact of its four-year pilot global gender programme (1996-2000) is being assessed through an evaluation.

13. UNICEF, through the support of the Gender and Programme Partnership Section of its Programme Division, has integrated gender concerns as a cross-cutting theme in its country programmes by adopting a life-cycle perspective, giving special attention to the girl child. UNFPA contributes to the advancement of women within the United Nations system, especially in its commitment to reproductive rights, gender equality and male responsibility, and to the autonomy and empowerment of women everywhere. Both UNICEF and UNFPA have supported the review and appraisal process of the Beijing Conference. Other United Nations entities committed to gender issues in their respective work include, *inter alia*, the Department of Public Information, the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the World Bank, the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

14. National machineries for the advancement of women. During the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985), a number of countries established or strengthened national mechanisms to plan, advocate and monitor progress in the advancement of women.[5] As of March 1999, according to the Directory of National Machinery for the Advancement of Women, 141 Member States had established national machineries specifically devoted to the advancement of women. Heads of State or Government, or government officials at the ministerial level or equivalent appointed 67 per cent of the executives of these national machineries

III. Servicing of intergovernmental bodies

A. Support to the Commission on the Status of Women

15. Since the adoption of the Platform for Action, the 12 critical areas of concern have formed the thematic basis of the work of the Commission on the Status of Women. At its fortieth session, the Commission adopted a timetable in the light of the need for a focused and thematic multi-year work programme on the 12 critical areas of concern: 1996 — media, poverty; 1997 — education, economy, power and decision-making, environment; 1998 — violence against women, armed conflict, human rights of women, the girl child; 1999 — health, institutional mechanisms. The Secretariat provided reports on the thematic issues to the Commission on the Status of Women based on expert group meetings. Substantive servicing of meetings of the Commission provided by the Division for the Advancement of Women during the biennium 1998-1999 included 10 meetings at which the Commission acted as the preparatory body for the special session of the General Assembly in 2000 and 80 plenary and Optional Protocol Working Group meetings of the Commission. Additionally, the Division for the Advancement of Women provides information to the Commission in response to its

resolutions regarding various issues. For example, in 1999 at the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the report on follow-up to the Beijing Conference provided information on the implementation of Commission resolution 42/2 on the release of women and children taken hostage in armed conflicts (see E/CN.6/1999/2, paras. 113-118).

B. Support to the Economic and Social Council

16. Substantive servicing of the Economic and Social Council meetings during the biennium 1998-1999 included 12 meetings of the high-level segment, the operational activities segment and the general segment of Council sessions. Parliamentary documentation submitted to the Economic and Social Council included a report on advancement of women and implementation of the Platform for Action (submitted to the high-level segment) and operational activities related to gender (submitted to the operational activities segment) (E/AC.51/1998/6 (Sect. 7A), para. 7A.40).

17. In 1997 the Economic and Social Council devoted one coordination segment to integrated follow-up to all United Nations conferences and one operational segment in 1998 to the theme "advancement of women: implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the role of operational activities in promoting, in particular, capacity-building and resource mobilization for enhancing the participation of women in development" (E/1998/54 and Corr.1). The theme of the high-level segment in 1999 was "the role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women" (see E/1999/53).

C. Support to the General Assembly

18. In addition to providing parliamentary documentation on the regular work of the programme (i.e., implementation of the Platform for Action, reports on the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the status of women in the Secretariat), the Division for the Advancement of Women submits annual reports to the General Assembly on thematic areas in response to various resolutions. For the biennium 1998-1999, such reports included effective mobilization for women in development, situation of women in rural areas, traditional and customary practices affecting the health of women, and trafficking in women and girls.

D. Views of delegations

19. The Central Evaluation Unit contacted representatives on each of these intergovernmental bodies who were familiar with the work of the Division for the Advancement of Women, including current and/or former bureau members of the Third Committee of the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women or the Preparatory Committee. Representatives were asked questions specifically regarding the documentation provided and support by staff members. Respondents commended substantive servicing of intergovernmental bodies. Note was made of the high level of expertise within the Women's Rights Unit. Representatives expressed general satisfaction with the number and usefulness of consultations and briefings and with the quality of parliamentary documentation prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women. A number of representatives described these reports as being highly analytical. Despite the high levels of support and commitment shown by staff members, delegations considered that the Division appeared severely understaffed, particularly when compared to other divisions within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

IV. Support to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

A. Description of the programme element

20. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted in General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979 and entered into force in 1981, is the first international legal instrument that defines discrimination against women and sets up an agenda of national action to end such discrimination. As of the end of 1999, 165 States had ratified the Convention. Under article 17 of the Convention, the Committee, established in 1982 at the first meeting of the States parties to the Convention, is composed of 23 experts

serving in their personal capacity. Pursuant to article 18, States parties undertake to submit to the Secretary-General for consideration by the Committee, a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures which they have adopted to give effect to the provisions of the Convention and on the progress made in this respect. These reports are to be submitted within one year after the entry into force for the State concerned, every four years thereafter, and whenever the Committee requests.

21. At its March 1999 session, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted an Optional Protocol to the Convention that allows communications to be submitted on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals claiming to be victims of a violation of any of the rights under the Convention, and establishes a second procedure by which the Committee can inquire into reliable information on grave or systematic violations of the rights in the Convention by a State party. The Optional Protocol was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/4 and signed by 23 States as of 10 December 1999 (see E/CN.6/2000/PC/2 and Corr.1 and 3). In anticipation of the entering into force of the Optional Protocol, the secretariat of the Committee in the Women's Rights Unit of the Division for the Advancement of Women retained a consultant to assess the staffing requirements in processing the expected inflow of communications. The unit is also arranging for a transfer of knowledge (guidelines and procedures) from the Human Rights Committee, which has a complaint procedure and has developed related operational guidelines. In an interview with the Central Evaluation Unit, the Chairperson of CEDAW expressed satisfaction with the support provided by the CEDAW secretariat.

22. Based on a study of the number of hits on the Division for the Advancement of Women web site within a four-month period in 1999, it appears that CEDAW attracts a substantial amount of interest (see, in this connection, paras. 80-88 below).

23. Reforms. Reforms of procedures and work practices in the Committee introduced since 1995[6] include revision of the general guidelines concerning the format and content of initial and periodic reports by State parties, with respect to the elaboration of concluding comments, designating a country rapporteur who, with the assistance of the Secretariat, seeks additional information on the situation of women in the State party under review, and establishing specific time limits for various steps in the reporting process. The Special Adviser has consistently advocated the ratification of the Convention among the remaining Member States that have not yet become parties to the Convention.

24. From 1996 to 1999, despite the introduction of a second session of the Committee in 1997 and other changes, such as focusing the dialogue on periodic reports on major issues and questions and establishing time limits for submitting reports and other responses, the backlog of reports awaiting consideration by the Committee has increased from 28 to 36. The number of overdue reports has also increased from 189 to 252 (including 54 initial reports). A review of the ways and means reports of the past three years indicates that the Committee has looked into these issues but has not yet developed plans of action.

25. Relationship with non-governmental organizations. At its sixteenth session, the Committee decided to encourage greater involvement of NGOs in accordance with the practice of the other treaty bodies. At the seventeenth session of CEDAW, in July 1997, the office of the Special Adviser reported to the Committee on steps that had been taken to facilitate participation by NGOs and their contribution to the work of the Committee. Greater involvement by NGOs in the work of CEDAW has also been facilitated by initiatives such as a joint publication of 1996 of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the International Women's Rights Action Watch to serve as a manual for monitoring implementation of the Convention entitled *Assessing the Status of Women* and a 1998 UNIFEM training booklet for NGOs entitled "Bringing Equality Home: Implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women".

26. In a Central Evaluation Unit survey of NGOs regarding their relationships with CEDAW, some NGOs suggested that the Division for the Advancement of Women facilitate greater participation for both local and international NGOs, provide more substantive and informative briefings on CEDAW for NGOs and improve the timeliness of submitting CEDAW reports and scheduling information on the web site to allow for better preparation. Interviews with the Division for the Advancement of Women staff indicate that the main difficulties in considering NGO reports appear to be that they are often long and submitted late, and that

there is a lack of funds for translating reports drafted in local languages.

27. Promoting the work of the Convention. It should be noted that the Commission on the Status of Women, in its resolutions 33/3 and 34/6, the General Assembly, in its resolution 49/164, *inter alia*, and the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1995/29, *inter alia*, have reiterated the request to provide for, facilitate and encourage public information activities relating to the Committee and to the Convention. Similarly, at the end of each CEDAW session, States parties are requested to disseminate widely, particularly to women's and human rights organizations, the concluding comments of the report, the Convention itself, the Committee's general recommendations and the Platform for Action. To that end, the Women's Rights Unit has sent the concluding comments to the permanent missions of the States parties and post them on the Division for the Advancement of Women web site as early as possible.

28. To commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention and the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Division for the Advancement of Women organized a judicial colloquium on the application of international human rights law at the domestic level, which was held at the United Nations Office at Vienna in October 1999. Participants urged the United Nations to explore the creation of an international judicial education centre to assist countries in the design, development and delivery of judicial education programmes on international human rights instruments and jurisprudence.

29. Another means by which the Division for the Advancement of Women has promoted the work of CEDAW is the series of publications entitled *The Work of CEDAW*, which consists of sets of the reports of the Committee on its sessions and of the summary records of the discussion. The purpose of this series is to publicize on a larger scale the Committee's work and to make records easily accessible to interested Governments, NGOs, research institutes, university scholars and other individuals. However, there is a 10-year backlog of reports awaiting publication — volumes III and IV, covering the years 1988 and 1989, were published in 1997 — which reduces its relevance and usefulness for scholars, researchers, lawyers and judges. The Division for the Advancement of Women is trying to reduce the backlog and has submitted for publication to the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, volumes V to VII (1990, 1991-1992 and 1993-1994). However, these are still unpublished. Delays in issuing the summary records are the major reason provided by the Division for the Advancement of Women for the existence of this backlog. However, those delays, ranging between two and three years, cannot entirely account for the backlog of *The Work of CEDAW* series.

30. In trying to assess the usefulness of this series to researchers and professionals, a search of the Lexis database was conducted with respect to references to the Convention in national case law. It was noted that whenever case law refers to the Convention, it refers to the initial General Assembly resolution, to the treaty itself or the session reports of CEDAW, but never to *The Work of CEDAW* series publications.

31. Two additional publications promoting the work of CEDAW, one by UNESCO and one by UNIFEM and UNICEF, illustrate collaborative efforts to promote the Convention by United Nations agencies. A UNESCO booklet on CEDAW entitled *Passport to Equality*, through extrabudgetary funds was translated into 10 languages and is being distributed worldwide to a variety of local groups. UNIFEM and UNICEF have jointly produced an information kit on the Convention, including information on relevant issues such as cultural and traditional practices, the rights of young women and reproductive and sexual rights.

B. Some evidence of programme impact

32. Legal and policy impact of the Convention. The UNIFEM training booklet (see para. 25 above) contains examples of how the Convention has been successfully implemented and its human rights principles integrated in constitutions, laws, policies and case laws at the national level in State parties. A search by the Central Evaluation Unit of law review journals and case law reports in the Lexis database indicated that, in many countries, domestic courts have reviewed cases involving discrimination against women which used the Convention to bolster the plaintiff's claims. For the period 1990 to 1999, the distribution of such cases found in the database is as follows: Australia, 31; Canada, 15; European Communities Court of Justice, 4; New Zealand, 10; Philippines, 1; South Africa, 5; United Kingdom, 7; United States Federal Courts, 3.

33. Impact of reporting procedures. States parties reports submitted to the Committee illustrate the impact that the CEDAW subprogramme has had at the national level in generating awareness of gender issues and encouraging a dialogue between Governments and NGOs. For example the report submitted by the Government of India for consideration at the twenty-second session of CEDAW stated: "The submission of this report has been preceded by widespread consultations throughout the country from 1993 to 1996 ... a total of over 20 meetings with a number of women's organizations were held during this period providing the Government and participants with considerable insight on a wide range of gender issues and issues relevant to Indian women. Further, one meeting was specifically held with NGOs and individual women interested in issues related to women's rights in late 1994 to elicit views on how to go about preparing India's initial report. The present report takes into account the discussions of this long and widespread consultative process. Further detailed discussions were held and written inputs received from various Ministries and Departments of the Government of India on different articles of the Convention."[7]

34. In a section on the CEDAW reporting process, the UNIFEM booklet mentioned above provides examples of the use NGOs have made of the reporting process to good effect: to hold their Governments accountable for the claims and commitments made at the sessions of the Committee, to continue dialogue with their Governments on implementing the Committee's concluding comments and as a vehicle to raise public awareness within their own countries.

35. Views in the professional literature. A number of articles on the Convention have appeared in professional journals in the fields of international law and human rights, describing the monitoring system established under the Convention, highlighting outputs that may be of use in proceedings before national courts and discussing domestic court cases in Australia, Botswana, Nepal and India in which the Convention has been invoked by the parties or by national courts. Others have focused on factors limiting the Convention's success, such as the Convention's policy on reservations, the limited authority it delegates to the Committee, its dependence on State self-reporting and lack of information regarding the work of the Convention.

36. Visibility of the programme in the media. Based on a search of the Nexis database of wire service stories about the United Nations and women with reference to CEDAW for the period 1992 to the present, it appears that the media interest in the CEDAW subprogramme is small compared to the interest accorded to the programme in general, but that since the Beijing Conference in 1995, it has attracted more attention, increasing from 18 per cent to 47 per cent of the total number of wire stories on the United Nations and women.

C. Assessments

37. A series of reports to the General Assembly of the meetings of the chairpersons of the treaty bodies (see, e.g., A/53/125 and A/53/432) and the report of the independent expert on enhancing the long-term effectiveness of the United Nations human rights treaty system (see E/CN.4/1997/74) have characterized common issues and remedies relevant to the work and practices of CEDAW.

38. In order to facilitate compliance by States with reporting obligations and reduce the number of overdue reports and the backlog of reports awaiting consideration, the chairpersons have recommended more focused reports, offering States parties advisory services and technical assistance and, in the absence of a scheduled report, consideration of the situation on the basis of information provided by the State party to other international bodies and of all other relevant information (see A/53/125, para. 28). Similarly, for overdue reports, the independent expert has recommended a more targeted advisory service and, as a last resort, examining the situation in the absence of a report (see E/CN.4/1997/74, paras. 45 and 74). The 1994 Chairpersons' recommendation that as CEDAW meeting time was inadequate, it should be significantly increased (see A/49/537, para. 49) was adopted in 1997 and implemented the following year.

39. With respect to the promotion of the work of the treaty bodies, as early as 1992, the chairpersons recommended a review of the distribution strategy of publications for specialists and the general public and an integrated strategy for conveying information from one organ to the other. The independent expert recommended that partnerships with academic and other external institutions be explored to enhance the publications (see E/CN.4/1997/74, para. 117).

40. A statement made by the Chairperson of CEDAW in December 1999 on the occasion of the opening for signature of the Optional Protocol to the Convention indicated that apart from creating new human rights mechanisms, there was a need for raising awareness among women about their human rights and about the existence of human rights systems at the international and regional levels.

V. Monitoring

A. Beijing Platform for Action

1. Background

41. The Fourth World Conference on Women was held at Beijing in September 1995, with over 47,000 people attending from Governments and NGOs. One of the outcomes was the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was adopted unanimously by 189 countries. The Platform for Action consists of concrete action to be implemented by Governments, intergovernmental bodies and civil society, categorized into 12 critical areas of concern. Since the 1985 Nairobi Conference, a review of the major obstacles to the advancement of women highlighted the need to take action in the following critical areas of concern: poverty, education and training, health, violence against women, armed conflict, economics, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms, women's human rights, media, environment, and the girl child.[3] Detailed information on the background of the Beijing Conference and on intergovernmental mechanisms for the follow-up of the conference and approaches underpinning the Platform for Action can be found in document E/CN.6/2000/PC/2.

2. Critical areas of concern

42. As discussed in paragraph 15 above, the strategic objectives and actions in the 12 critical areas of concern have been considered by the Commission on the Status of Women since 1996. In its resolution 1996/6, the Economic and Social Council called for analytical reports to be submitted annually to the Commission on the Status of Women on the thematic issues to be addressed in connection with the implementation of selected critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action. These reports, which include specific strategies and recommendations, form the basis for the Commission on the Status of Women's formulation of its agreed conclusions. The reports on thematic issues were based on reports of expert group meetings, four of which took place at the regional commissions from 1997 to 1999. In 1996, for example, the expert group meeting on the impact of gender difference in political decision-making and conflict resolution, held at INSTRAW, Santo Domingo, was jointly organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women and the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo in cooperation with INSTRAW and UNESCO. In Addis Ababa in October 1997, the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNICEF, UNFPA and ECA jointly organized an expert group meeting on adolescent girls and their rights. In 1998, the Division for the Advancement of Women organized a meeting on mainstreaming the gender perspective into the health sector and another meeting in connection with institutional mechanisms. Based on interviews with delegations, the quality of these expert group meetings was considered high. The conclusions and recommendations of the meetings have been influential in the intergovernmental debate on these issues. On-line conferences on each of the critical areas of concern were also facilitated on the WomenWatch web site (see para. 85 below).

43. From 1996 to 1999, the Division for the Advancement of Women provided substantive support to the Commission on the Status of Women in its consideration and adoption of an Optional Protocol to the Convention. It facilitated the intergovernmental debate in the Open-Ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention and in the Commission on the Status of Women by preparing the following reports: a report of the Secretary-General on communications and inquiry procedures and practices under international human rights instruments and under the Charter of the United Nations (E/CN.6/1997/4) and two reports of the Secretary-General containing the views of Governments and NGOs on the elaboration of a draft Optional Protocol (E/CN.6/1996/10 and E/CN.6/1997/5). The Division for the Advancement of Women also provided substantive support during the drafting of the Optional Protocol. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues also made several statements before the Commission on the Status of Women and in press conferences on progress achieved in the negotiations.

44. An opinion survey was conducted by the Central Evaluation Unit in which delegations of Member States, Division for the Advancement of Women staff members, heads of relevant United Nations agencies and departments and NGOs were asked to give an opinion on which of the 12 critical areas of concern the United Nations has had the greatest impact. Many respondents considered that the Division for the Advancement of Women had made a substantial contribution to the area of human rights, in particular through facilitating the intergovernmental debate leading to the adoption of the Optional Protocol. With respect to violence, health and education, other relevant specialized agencies were mentioned.

3. Emerging issues

45. The Commission on the Status of Women examines emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women and makes recommendations to the Economic and Social Council accordingly. To facilitate this process, the Division for the Advancement of Women provides reports on the basis of which the Commission can identify these issues. In 1999, the secretariat submitted such a report to the Commission entitled "Gender and ageing: problems, perceptions and policies" that provided a set of recommendations related to research, the economic situation of elderly women, their well-being, empowerment and their portrayal by the media (E/CN.6/1999/3). The report followed a previous report entitled "Older women and support systems: new challenges" (E/CN.6/1998/4) and the Expert Group Meeting on Caregiving and Older Persons: Gender Dimensions, which was jointly organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Division on Social Policy and Development and held in Malta from 30 November to 2 December 1997.

4. Review and appraisal

46. The General Assembly decided in paragraph 1 of its resolution 52/231 that a high-level plenary review to appraise and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Platform for Action and to consider further actions and initiatives would be held as a special session of the General Assembly in June 2000. In preparation of the review and appraisal, Beijing+5, most of the agencies of the United Nations system have contributed information and analysis for reviewing progress in implementing the Platform for Action, including regional activities, national-level reporting, and the preparation of various other reports and reviews.

47. In October 1998 the Division for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with the five regional commissions, sent out a questionnaire in which governments were asked to report on their actions to implement the Platform for Action in each of the 12 critical areas of concern. As of mid-December 1999, 133 Member States and two Observers had responded to the questionnaire. Drawing primarily on the responses, the report of the Secretary-General on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action provides an assessment of initiatives for achieving progress in this area under the following categories: (a) policy change; (b) legal change; (c) institutional change; (d) programme-level changes; (e) generation and dissemination of knowledge; and (f) resource allocation (see E/CN.6/2000/PC/2, paras. 36-93).

48. The report states that "profound changes in the status and role of women have occurred in the years since the start of the United Nations Decade for Women in 1976, some more markedly since the Fourth World Conference on Women. During that time, women have entered the labour force in unprecedented numbers, actually or potentially increasing their ability to participate in economic decision-making at all levels, starting with the household. Women, individually and collectively, have been major actors in the rise of civil society throughout the world, stimulating pressure for increased awareness of the gender equality dimensions of all issues, and demanding a role in national and global decision-making processes" (ibid., para. 30). Other significant changes include the adoption of policies to increase women's equal participation in all levels of political and economic decision-making (ibid., para. 38); law reforms, including the ratification and incorporation of the Convention into national constitutions, the elimination, prevention and punishment of violence against women (ibid., paras. 43-45); the restructuring or upgrading of national machineries in many countries, in all regions, in an effort to make them stronger and more coherent (ibid., para. 56); and efforts to mainstream gender equality perspectives at the programme level (ibid., para. 66).

49. In interviews conducted by the Central Evaluation Unit with Division for the Advancement of

Women staff, and representatives of departments, programmes and NGOs, methodological issues were identified in connection with the Division's preparation of the review and appraisal report (E/CN.6/2000/PC/2). Suggestions focused primarily on the need to apply to such large research projects in the future more systematic advanced planning of the analytical framework, data collection methods and instruments, better coordination in obtaining already published information from other United Nations entities and Governments and better coordination during the analysis phase of the project. In response to a draft of the present report, the Special Adviser stated that the criticism expressed does not take fully into account such constraints as limited staff, lack of consultancy funds, difficulties with translations of government replies and national plans, among others.

B. Gender mainstreaming

50. In paragraph 38 of the Beijing Declaration, the Governments participating in the Conference state: "We hereby adopt and commit ourselves as Governments to implement the following Platform for Action, ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in all our policies and programmes."[4] In paragraph 3 of its resolution 50/203 of 22 December 1995, the General Assembly called upon "States, the United Nations system and all other actors to implement the Platform for Action, in particular by promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective at all levels".

51. In September 1999, the capacity of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues to monitor this area was strengthened by the addition of a Principal Social Affairs Officer for gender mainstreaming. Specific responsibilities include supporting the existing components of United Nations entities' gender mainstreaming action plans and developing new methodologies, performance indicators, techniques and tools to support practical implementation of the mainstreaming mandate. The Office of the Special Adviser and all units within the Division for the Advancement of Women share the responsibilities for gender mainstreaming in their respective areas of work.

52. The Division for the Advancement of Women has monitored the implementation of gender mainstreaming in United Nations programmes in reports to the General Assembly (e.g., A/54/264), the Economic and Social Council (e.g., E/1998/64) and the Commission on the Status of Women on initiatives taken. It has also contributed to developing a conceptual framework that could be applied to all programmes and has submitted several analytical reports on this issue in response to various requests by the Economic and Social Council. For example, the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General entitled "Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system" included the recommendations that provided the basis for the Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming.[8]

53. In March 1998, the ACC adopted a statement on gender equality and mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations system (ACC/1998/4, para. 63) in which heads of the organizations pledged to mainstream a gender perspective in all their institutions, policies and programmes by implementing the Economic and Social Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2. In a letter of 13 October 1997 to all senior officials in the United Nations system the Secretary-General emphasized the accountability of senior managers in gender mainstreaming. The Special Adviser established an ongoing exchange with various senior managers to facilitate their efforts on this issue (see E/1998/64, chap. II, sect. B). In its resolution 1998/43, the Economic and Social Council welcomed the efforts of the Division for the Advancement of Women and urged the Commission on the Status of Women "to continue to provide suggestions to the Council and its subsidiary bodies on further measures to implement the strategy of gender mainstreaming".

54. Gender mainstreaming activities by United Nations departments on the implementation of the Beijing Conference (see A/53/308, chap. II, sect. B) include: the theme of the thirty-third session of the Commission on Population and Development, "Gender, population and development," and a *Handbook for Producing National Statistical Reports on Women and Men*,[9] issued by the Statistics Division. Another example of gender mainstreaming is provided by the UNDP in the annual *Human Development Report*, which uses a gender-related development index in ranking countries. The Office of Human Resources Management, with the collaboration of a number of departments, has organized training to introduce gender awareness programmes in the Department of Political Affairs, ECA, ESCWA, the United Nations Office at

Vienna, and the United Nations Office in Nairobi and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

C. Status of women in the Secretariat

55. In 1997, following the appointment of a Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women at the level of Assistant Secretary-General, the Office of the Focal Point for Women was transferred from the Office of Human Resources Management to the Office of the Special Adviser. Its major responsibility is to monitor the status of women in the Secretariat. In this connection, the Focal Point for Women has undertaken missions to a number of regional commissions and peacekeeping missions — at the request of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations — to assess the situation of women staff at those duty stations and to brief managers and staff members on policies and strategies to achieve gender equality. She is also a member of ORIGIN, a network of senior human resources management and gender specialists within and outside the United Nations system, which shares information on best practices and new initiatives to achieve gender equality in their respective organizations. The Focal Point provides advice and counsel to women staff members seeking to resolve grievances regarding their career development prospects and conditions of service. In 1999, the Focal Point handled 171 such cases. She is assisted in her work by a network of departmental focal points for women. The terms of reference of the departmental focal points were formalized in a Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/1999/19).

56. Reports on the status of women in the Secretariat (see A/54/405) submitted to the General Assembly include statistics on gender distribution by department and grade for Professional and higher-level staff as well as a description of initiatives taken since the previous reporting period.

57. Another mechanism for monitoring the status of women is the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women, which has been in existence since 1986. Its terms of reference were revised in June 1999 (ibid.), and the Steering Committee, after a hiatus, reconvened in late 1999.

58. In 1994 the Joint Inspection Unit noted that progress had been too limited and efforts too narrowly focused to achieve overall gender equity at any time in the near future (see A/49/176). The 1999 report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat stated that although "visible progress has been made in improving the representation of women at the senior and policy-making levels, progress in improving women's representation overall in the Professional and higher categories has been slow. Although the goal of 50/50 gender distribution has been very useful in keeping up the momentum, the target will not be met by 2000" (A/54/405, para. 6). In order to accelerate the slow pace of progress (1 per cent increase in representation per year over a period of 10 years) in achieving the target of 50/50 representation and to address a perceived difficulty in the monitoring mechanism (i.e., a failure to measure both the compliance of programme managers with gender equality goals and the opportunities presented for the selection of women candidates to vacant posts), the Secretary-General reiterated in 1999 that he would request departments to prepare gender action plans and to set specific targets for the appointment and promotion of women. The establishment and implementation of the gender action plans will provide the Secretary-General with an important tool for measuring the performance of individual departments and offices, and for ensuring the accountability of individual managers. In paragraphs 11 and 12 of its resolution 54/139 of 17 December 1999, the General Assembly welcomed the notion of action plans and requested the "Secretary-General to monitor closely the progress made by departments and offices in meeting the goal of gender balance". The special measures for women contained in ST/AI/1999/9 of 21 September 1999 recommended that cumulative seniority be considered for the purposes of regular and accelerated promotion of women, and that departmental action plans be established including gender distribution goals and succession plans. The current Secretary-General's bulletin on policies to achieve gender equality in the United Nations dates from 1996 and does not reflect these new measures (see ST/SGB/282).

59. The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues has participated in the working groups on human resource planning, recruitment and placement and quality of work/life issues and has provided preliminary comments on the task team report on recruitment and placement to the Assistant Secretary-General, Office of Human Resources Management, and

the Deputy Secretary-General within the framework of the Subcommittee on Human Resources Management Reform.

VI. Coordination

A. Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality

60. After existing for 20 years on an ad hoc basis, the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE) was established in 1996 as a standing committee of the ACC. Chaired by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and supported by the Division for the Advancement of Women, IACWGE is composed of focal points on women and gender issues from United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes and the Secretariat. Once an issue is identified by IACWGE, a particular agency is assigned as "task manager" for inter-sessional activities. IACWGE meets at Headquarters officially once a year for three to four working days before the Commission on the Status of Women session and convenes ad hoc meetings as necessary. Currently, IACWGE is involved in a number of initiatives such as a compendium of good practices in implementing the Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming, methodologies for gender impact analysis and a database on gender training materials (see ACC/1999/3, chap. III, sect. A).

61. The Central Evaluation Unit contacted participants in the latest IACWGE meeting in February 1999 to obtain their feedback on the workings of the IACWGE. Despite some suggestions for improvement, the overall assessment of IACWGE has been positive. Many members of IACWGE pointed out the need to maintain contact more regularly and informally. Many members also reacted positively to the idea of having continuing discussions on-line that had commenced in formal meetings.

62. At the last meeting of the Geneva-based Gender Working Group, in January 2000, including gender focal points from United Nations Children's Fund, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/United Nations, International Labour Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Telecommunication Union, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), World Health Organization, Economic Commission for Europe/United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs/United Nations, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development/United Nations, and International Trade Centre, participants were invited to discuss a Central Evaluation Unit questionnaire on IACWGE. In a written response to Central Evaluation Unit, the Group stated that, as the only forum for all agencies/specific departments of the United Nations Secretariat/regional commissions/Bretton Woods institutions to share information and United Nations-wide concerns and interact with each other, IACWGE has served as a critical meeting and contact point, ensuring policy continuity and action on gender issues within the United Nations. Additionally, IACWGE provides important tools/information to promote gender mainstreaming within individual organizations, e.g., ACC statements on gender equality, and has played an important role as catalyst, e.g., the creation of the Geneva-based Gender Working Group. The Group considered that the weaknesses that exist relate to the fact that representation on IACWGE is only optional and not mandatory and that the short duration of the annual meetings prevent in-depth discussions. The Group was also of the opinion that the Geneva-based organizations often feel "side-lined" since they are not members of any of the task forces and, too often, are out of the "information loop". The Group also stated that the IACWGE, while a subcommittee of the ACC, does not report directly to the ACC. Therefore, the recommendations are not filtered back to the agencies through the ACC machinery.

B. System-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women

63. As secretariat and coordinator in the preparation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001 the Division for the Advancement of Women is responsible for preparing and circulating drafts and organizing inter-agency meetings to finalize the medium-term plan. Since the Beijing Conference, the medium-term plan has undergone a series of reviews by the Commission on the Status of Women and CPC, including a mid-term review in 1998 (see E/CN.6/1998/3). At its fourth session, IACWGE

"considered that the preparation of the present plan (1996-2001), including its mid-term review, had been a useful exercise for participating entities" (ACC/1999/3, para. 29). A new draft plan for 2002-2005 is currently being prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women taking into consideration the recommendations of the Commission on the Status for Women and CPC in the mid-term review.

C. Other coordination activities

64. The ACC has emphasized the need to approach in an integrated manner the follow-up to the United Nations global conferences by promoting a coordinated national-level follow-up around three ad hoc task forces linked to the Resident Coordinator system. To ensure that policy objectives for the advancement of women are pursued by each task force, interaction with the established ACC machinery has taken place through UNIFEM, which serves as the IACWGE focal point for liaison with the ACC task forces.

65. In addition to the above coordination mechanisms, information exchange and collaboration occur as needed through informal dialogue between staff members of various entities. For example the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and INSTRAW have worked together to maintain and develop the WomenWatch web site, including efforts to raise nearly $800,000 for the inter-agency project. In 1998, UNIFEM organized the United Nations inter-agency global videoconference, A World Free of Violence against Women. The regional commissions frequently exchange information and collaborate with the Division for the Advancement of Women to sponsor jointly meetings or activities. Other examples of coordination are mentioned throughout the present report.

66. The issue of coordination in the above-mentioned entities has been addressed by the Economic and Social Commission in its agreed conclusions 1997/2, in which it recommends that IACWGE, the Division for the Advancement of Women, INSTRAW and UNIFEM, in their advocacy and advisory roles, should better coordinate their support and catalytic activities and should develop joint activities and work plans in appropriate areas.[8]

67. Interviews conducted by the Central Evaluation Unit indicated that there is some risk of duplication of efforts in the separate provision of gender advisory services by the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM, UNDP and the regional commissions. Both UNDP and UNIFEM provide advisory services and training in gender mainstreaming, and two regional commissions (ECA and ESCWA) have indicated that they provide advisory services to Member States in the area of monitoring the Platform for Action. Senior officials in some of these entities suggested to the Central Evaluation Unit in interviews that efforts to coordinate should be increased, particularly at the senior level. Other suggestions included discussions on work plans and strategies, and exploration of comparative advantages of various United Nations entities.

VII. Outreach

A. Visibility of the Conference and its implications

68. As table 1 indicates, among the United Nations conferences of the 1990s, the Fourth World Conference on Women received the most media coverage, even greater than the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

Table 1
Media coverage of United Nations conferences

	Number of wire service stories
Fourth World Conference on Women (1995)	3 103
World Summit for Children (1991)	457
United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992)	2 760
World Conference on Human Rights (1993)	867
International Conference on Population and Development (1994)	1 525
World Summit for Social Development (1995)	587
United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (1996)	339

69. It should also be noted that the Fourth World Conference on Women was characterized by a very large involvement of civil society, with over 30,000 participants attending a parallel forum organized by NGOs.

70. The very high media coverage and NGO involvement in the Beijing Conference shows the strong impact of the Conference in generating public interest in United Nations activities on the advancement of women is a measure of the level of potential interest that might be tapped into by outreach activities.

B. Print publications

71. The recurrent and non-recurrent publications of the Division for the Advancement of Women are distributed, free of charge, to Permanent Missions, Foreign Ministries and other official recipients on mailing lists maintained by the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services and on mailing lists maintained by the Division for the Advancement of Women. The publications are also deposited with 71 United Nations information centres and 342 national depository libraries in 147 countries. Division for the Advancement of Women publications are also sold by subscription and at United Nations bookstores and authorized bookshops. Total print runs of publications are determined through consultation between the Department, the Sales and Marketing Section (DPI) and Documents Control Section (DGAACS) and are approved by the Publications Board. Table 2 below includes the titles of different categories of Division for the Advancement of Women sales publications for the period 1995-1999. In addition, other Division for the Advancement of Women reports of expert group meetings were published by the ILO, on gender education and development, 1996; and educational training and lifelong learning of women, 1997; and by UNFPA, on the round table of human rights treaty bodies, 1998.

72. The publication *Women in a Changing Global Economy: World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, 1994 was requested by the General Assembly in 1992 and designed to be a key input into the Beijing Conference. Since 1995, 90 per cent of the sales stocks have been sold. This publication is also one of four Secretariat social "flagship" publications (the others being the *World Social Situation*, *World Population Monitoring* and *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics*). An assessment of this publication was included in a 1997 internal review which analysed the social flagship reports in terms of their objectives, target audiences, value added and areas of overlap and inconsistency. The internal review found that the 1994 *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* was well distributed at the Beijing Conference and influenced the resulting Programme for Action, particularly with regard to the need to increase investments in women as a part of poverty alleviation strategies. The review also found that the recurrent publication had become a solid, informative, innovative and forward-looking publication that should be of interest to a wide audience, but that it suffers from an unwarranted low visibility, and that consideration should be given to increasing publicity efforts at the time of publication.

Table 2

Free distribution and sales of Division for the Advancement of Women publications (1995-1999) and The World's Women (1995)

Title of publication and Sales No.	*Print run (all languages)*	*Official list*	*Dept. list*	*Sales (as of Dec. 1999)*
From Beijing to Nairobi (E.95.IV.5)	1 815	–	–	1 581 [1 815]*
Women In a Changing Global Economy: World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, 1994 (E.95.IV.1)	8 955	5 155	1 350	2 189 [2 450]*
World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, 1999 (E.99.IV.8)	5 530	1 230	800	98 [3 500]*
The Work of CEDAW, vol. IV, 1989 (E.96.IV.7)	3 305	2 290	350	180 [665]*
Expert Group Meeting Report on Women and Health, 1998 (E.99.IV.4)	4 490	1 340	2 500	187 [650]*
The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics (E.95.XVII.2)	45 585	8 925	5 160	11 074 [31 500]*

Source: Information provided by Documents Control Section, Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, and Sales and Marketing Section, Department of Public Information. Numbers include all languages.

* Total number of initial sales stock.

73. The 1999 *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, a basic document for the special session of the General Assembly in 2000, focuses on the theme of globalization from a gender perspective. It drew on background papers prepared by other organizational units, specialized agencies and programmes. The publication was launched in October 1999 with a press conference. While it is too early to assess sales patterns, interviews with Division for the Advancement of Women staff members indicate that there is confidence that with support from the Department of Information, and possibly a public relations consultant, the survey could achieve high visibility. This confidence is reflected in the fact that 63 per cent of the print run has been earmarked for sales, compared to 30 per cent for the 1994 edition. The drastic reduction, as indicated in table 2, in official and departmental free distribution is compatible with a strategy of increasing sales, but the 40 per cent reduction in the total print run seems to the Central Evaluation Unit to be inconsistent with the experience with the 1994 edition.

74. Two publications prepared by the Division, *From Beijing to Nairobi* and the 1994 *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, have sold 1,500 copies or more. The relatively high number of sales of these two publications at opportune times suggest the importance of planning the timing of publications to coincide with major events. *The World's Women*, prepared by the Statistics Division, which was also made available at the Beijing Conference, has sold over 11,000 copies since 1995. The Central Evaluation Unit notes that figures for the print run and official distribution of that publication are lower than those given by the same office three years ago and published in the in-depth evaluation of the statistics programme (see E/AC.51/1997/2, table 3).

75. Delays in the publication of the work of a recurrent sales publication, *The Work of CEDAW*, and the problems that this creates for professional users are discussed in paragraph 29 above.

76. Recurrent publications such as the "Directory of National Machineries", the "Women 2000" newsletter and "Network", a newsletter produced by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, are not issued as sales publications. The "Women 2000" newsletter, a recurrent but not a sales publication, is issued twice a year (8,000 copies in English; 2,000 in Spanish, since 1997; and 2,000 in French, since 1998). There have been delays in issuing the two newsletters scheduled for 1999. Each issue is generally devoted to a theme (e.g., the role of women in United Nations peacekeeping, 1995, or women and decision-making, 1997). The newsletter is prepared by an external consultant under the supervision of a staff member of the Division for the Advancement of Women and is not yet available through the Internet. While each issue includes a reader's survey form, the reader response rate is too low to be of analytical significance.

77. As was noted in the in-depth evaluation on the statistics programme (E/AC.51/1997/2), the United Nations does realize modest revenues from sales publications, but it does not analyse income from each publication or the costs of production. It is clear from the print runs and sales figures in table 2 that two of the publications (*The Work of CEDAW*, vol. IV, 1989, and *Expert Group Meeting Report on Women and Health*, 1998) have little or no commercial significance.

78. Information on the actual sales and departmental and official distribution is maintained separately by three organizational units: the Marketing and Sales Section, Department of Public Information; the Document Control Section, Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, and the Office of the Special Adviser. No unit is responsible for putting together the full picture on actual distribution and sales. Without this feedback, management cannot periodically review distribution and sales figures for its publications. In this connection, the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services stated that it can provide to author departments upon request, the information it maintains on print runs, and remaining stocks earmarked for sales and free distribution, and the Department of Public Information agreed on the importance of providing periodic feedback to author departments on sales distribution and is working on providing such a service.

C. Use of professional journals

79. As was mentioned in paragraphs 6, 42 and 45 during the period 1992-1999, the Division for the Advancement of Women organized at least two expert group meetings and workshops annually. The reports resulting from these expert group meetings are posted on the Division for the Advancement of Women web site, and three have been published by the United Nations, ILO and UNFPA. The Division has collected

samples of newsletters of NGOs and other professional groups that contain references to these expert group meeting reports. In interviews with the Central Evaluation Unit, delegations and senior colleagues outside the Division for the Advancement of Women found these reports to be of high quality. Generally, with a few exceptions (two articles based on the work of these expert groups have appeared as chapters in books[10]), there is no concerted effort to convert these reports or other analytical material produced by the Division into articles for publication in professional journals. This would be an effective way to promote the work of the Division for the Advancement of Women among professionals in the fields of women studies and human rights.

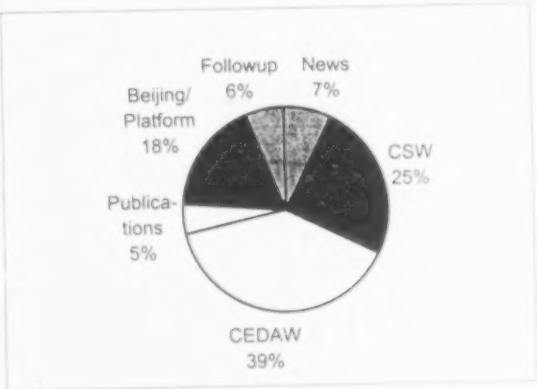
D. Web sites

80. The Division for the Advancement of Women services two separate but related web sites, the Division web site and the WomenWatch web site. The former is managed by the Division, while the latter is a joint project. The Division site shares the same directory as the WomenWatch web site but has its own distinct features and navigation structure.

81. The web site of the Division for the Advancement of Women (www.un.org womenwatch/daw) was created as part of the preparatory process of the Beijing Conference. A project proposal of the Division for the Advancement of Women on WomenWatch: virtual networking to strengthen civil society participation in Beijing+5 and in emerging areas of focus for the twenty-first century stated that during the preparation for and at the Beijing Conference, a total of 158,722 requests were made to the Division for the Advancement of Women web page from 68 countries during less than one month, thereby testifying to the importance of this electronic tool for women to ensure mobilization and information exchange. Currently, the Division's web site provides information on the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and CEDAW, as well as current news and information on issues relating to the advancement of women. A statistical analysis of the distribution of hits on the Division for the Advancement of Women web site (see table 3 below) shows that during the period from April to July 1999, the highest interest among the users of the Division's web site was in information regarding CEDAW and the Commission on the Status of Women.

82. Launched on International Women's Day, 8 March 1997, WomenWatch is the United Nations Internet gateway to information on women's issues. Under the guidance of the Special Adviser, WomenWatch provides current information on women-specific features of global United Nations conferences, regional and national plans of action for women's advancement, upcoming events of the United Nations system and other organizations, gender statistics and in collaboration with the Focal Point, United Nations vacancies that encourage women to apply. A joint initiative of the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and INSTRAW, the web site provides links to entities within the United Nations system that deal with advancement and empowerment of women. The Britannica Internet Guide (*Britannica.com*) has recently selected WomenWatch as a recommended site. In addition to being a passive information provider, WomenWatch receives about 8 to 10 e-mail inquiries per day through the site. The Division for the Advancement of Women site receives about 10 to 15 inquiries per day. The Division responds to both sets of inquiries. Questions asked to webmasters frequently concern requests for research assistance, information or employment opportunities. Additionally, during a one-year period, 346 telephone, 403 in-person and 46 group mail requests for information were received by the Division for the Advancement of Women alone.

Table 3
Number of hits on the Division for the Advancement of Women web site, April-July 1999, by subject of inquiry



83. WomenWatch is managed by the WomenWatch Advisory Committee made up of representatives from the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and INSTRAW, and is chaired by the Division. The site is maintained and kept up to date by one full-time staff member of the Division. Another staff member of the Division works part time on WomenWatch, but is primarily responsible for the Division web site. Similarly, one staff at UNIFEM works part time on WomenWatch, but her primary responsibility is UNIFEM's web site. Contributing partners include UNESCO, the World Bank, the sustainable development networking programme, the UNDP gender-in-development programme and the Instituto de la Mujer. As it is an inter-agency project, ideas are also exchanged through the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (see paras. 60-62). National machineries for the advancement of women and various international, national and regional NGOs focusing on women's issues have also made contributions to the site's projects.

84. WomenWatch, one of numerous electronic sites created by United Nations agencies, has among the highest number of hits received by these sites. Table 4 below shows the number of hits per month of selected social activities of relevant United Nations web sites, including, women (*www.un.org/womenwatch*, *www.un.org/womenwatch/daw*); human rights (*www.unhchr.org*); ageing (*www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing*); poverty (*www.un.org/esa/socdev/poverty*); disabled (*www.un.org/esa/socdev/disabled*) in the period April to July 1999.

Table 4
Number of hits per month of selected United Nations web sites, April-July 1999

	Women (WomenWatch and the Division for the Advancement of Women)	*Human rights (UNHCR)*	*Ageing, poverty and disabled*
April	112 196	53 922	487
May	93 504	41 646	512
June	107 420	42 550	439
July	94 956	40 792	461

85. Recently, WomenWatch hosted a series of on-line conferences on the 12 critical areas of concern as a part of the review and appraisal process. Individuals and organizations were invited to participate in a series of time-limited, moderated on-line discussions focusing mainly on success stories or good practices, obstacles and lessons learned. About 40 per cent of the invitations were sent directly to people and organizations in developing countries, and approximately 10,000 subscribers from 122 countries participated in the on-line dialogues. Moderators were specialists in the various critical areas of concern, and several advisers were consulted in carrying out the project. A report on these discussions will be submitted as a document at the special session of the General Assembly.

86. At panels organized by NGOs around the issue of women and information technologies at the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, WomenWatch has been referred to as a model electronic initiative. In interviews with the Central Evaluation Unit, 15 representatives of NGOs stated that they had used or quoted from the two United Nations web sites in their own work either "sometimes" or "frequently". Special mention was given to the Beijing + 5 section. Many respondents indicated that the sites had shown considerable progress in recent months in posting more information of use and of interest. There were, however, some points that were repeatedly made on areas that needed improvement. Official documents and reports, especially agendas for upcoming meetings and sessions (e.g., Commission on the Status of Women, CEDAW) were not available on the site in a timely enough manner to permit NGOs to plan around these events, and navigation to obtain documents on-line was often found to be confusing. Work has been under way to restructure the Division for the Advancement of Women site and to move it to a different directory. Many NGOs proposed links to be put on the site. Since the launching of the site, other sites similar to it have emerged, for example, a parallel NGO site called "WomenAction 2000" to which WomenWatch provided both guidance and financial support.

87. Although efforts have begun to assess the usefulness of the site through analysing the number of hits, the profiles and information of the end-users and their needs still remain largely unknown. Plans to undertake a full evaluation of the web site through outsourcing various tools of appraisal are under way. Currently WomenWatch does have a feedback form on the site, but few users have responded to this. Plans for improvements in the near future include: expansion of the Beijing + 5 section; the redesigning of the Division

for the Advancement of Women site to make navigation easier; more country-specific information; additional links; and the more timely posting of information.

88. The number of hits and the interactive nature of the activity on the WomenWatch web site show that this technological tool is a significant source of information and outreach. In addition to providing valuable information, the site is interactive through the activities around the on-line dialogues. Collaboration and coordination with a broad-based range of actors around these discussions has added an additional, innovative means of outreach.

E. Activities with non-governmental organizations

89. The Platform for Action states, in paragraph 289, that in effectively implementing the Platform for Action NGOs have a "specific role to play in creating a social, economic, political and intellectual climate based on equality between women and men."[2] Subsequently, it was recognized that the facilitation of increased involvement by NGOs would "require considerable expansion of the outreach capacity of the Division, including through publications, increased use of new information technologies, support for dissemination of information through mass media and women's networks, advisory services and database and network linkages" (A/50/744, para. 68).

90. Specific outputs relating to NGOs include briefings for NGOs on sessions of the General Assembly and Commission on the Status of Women and substantive support in the form of background papers and participation in special events. The relationship of NGOs to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has been examined in paragraphs 25 and 26 above. The Division for the Advancement of Women's interaction with NGOs is the responsibility of the Coordination and Outreach Unit, which was established in 1996 to enhance and strengthen linkages on gender issues with the academic and research community, women's organizations, national machinery, networks and development institutions (A/54/223, para. 99). Currently, only one staff member is responsible for all coordination and correspondence with NGOs, including their participation in the Commission on the Status of Women. During the annual NGO registration with the Commission on the Status of Women, the Division relies on the help of interns and volunteers to assist the large number of NGOs. Despite these efforts, representatives of NGOs stated that the lack of assistance was a severe problem.

91. The numbers of NGOs involved in sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women has been increasing, and according to a Division staff member, it is anticipated that for the upcoming special session of the General Assembly, more than 400 NGOs, not including those that are accredited with the Economic and Social Council, will be represented. As part of their role as the secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women facilitates NGO participation in sessions of the Commission. NGOs hold parallel side events alongside meetings of the Commission and contribute to activities of the Commission. At the forty-third session of the Commission, the Division registered 319 NGOs represented by 812 persons, facilitated more than 50 NGO side events and held daily briefings and caucus meetings. A special briefing was provided by the Deputy Director, and one hour during the general debate was set aside for NGOs to make statements. Spokespersons representing NGO caucuses on relevant issues also spoke during the dialogues on the critical areas of concern. For the last three years, the Division has also sponsored a small group of women from NGOs in developing countries to participate in sessions of the Commission. The selection process of this group occurs in consultation with several NGOs. In addition, the Division for the Advancement of Women exchanges information with NGOs through the quarterly newsletter "Women 2000", the WomenWatch web site and on-line dialogues on the 12 critical areas of concern. Information on the activities of NGOs and other institutions of civil society in implementing the Platform for Action is regularly included in reports submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women and the General Assembly (see E/CN.6/1999/2, paras. 43-52, and A/54/264, paras. 50-57, respectively). Briefings for NGOs are held before sessions of the Commission, and meetings are convened between NGOs and the Division for the Advancement of Women as needed. The Division also currently maintains a database of NGOs. Additionally, the Special Adviser, Director and other staff members frequently participate as speakers at NGO events throughout the year.

92. As mentioned in paragraph 86 above, CEU conducted a survey among NGOs identified by the Division for the Advancement of Women as close collaborators. Several NGOs stated that the Division's relations with NGOs have shown significant improvement in recent years and that this healthy trend seems to be continuing. Many NGOs stated that they would like to be more involved and at an earlier stage in the preparatory process. Several saw the need for more than one access point for NGOs. NGOs also indicated their desire for more briefings on CEDAW and other facets of the United Nations system. Almost all NGOs that were interviewed were concerned with the issue of establishing clear modalities regarding both participation in the Commission on the Status of Women and collaboration with the Division for the Advancement of Women. Many expressed the need to set clear, defined and agreed upon modalities for NGO participation, particularly on the selection of NGOs addressing the Commission during the general debate. Despite the Division's regular contact with NGOs, many NGO representatives expressed the sentiment that the Division's collaboration with NGOs was selective and based more on personal contacts than on formal modalities.

93. A number of recommendations have been made on the issue of coordination and outreach to NGOs. In 1996, the Economic and Social Council, recommended in its decision 1996/297, that the General Assembly examine the question of the participation of NGOs in all areas of the work of the United Nations in the light of the experience gained through arrangements for consultations between NGOs and the Economic and Social Council. In the mid-term review of the medium-term plan, 1996-2001, one of the recommendations was to develop principles and guidelines for strengthening cooperation with NGOs active on gender issues, both in advocacy and project implementation (E/CN.6/1998/3, para. 52 (m)). In addition, the Joint Inspection Unit recommended that "the executive heads of organizations of the United Nations system should take concrete steps to make their ... gender programmes more effective, *inter alia*, ... through the increased emphasis on outreach and interaction with women's and other non-governmental organizations" (see A/54/223, para. 44), and in relation to actions to be taken by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretary-General, that "the comparatively feeble resources of the Division for the Advancement of Women should be increased and concentrated much more on information outreach, system-wide programming and follow-up, and interaction with non-governmental organizations" (ibid., para. 94).

VIII. Gender advisory services

94. In the 1998 restructuring of the Secretariat and establishment of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, four additional Professional posts were redeployed to the Division for the Advancement of Women to support gender analysis and advisory services to Governments on gender issues. As was mentioned in paragraph 7 above, an interregional adviser was assigned to the Gender Advisory Services Unit in 1999.

95. The proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 states that one of the shifts of the subprogramme on the advancement of women would be to integrate more fully gender policy advisory services into its overall work programme (see A/54/6 (Sect. 9) and Corr.1, para. 9.68). Evaluation is also a responsibility of the Unit.

96. The Unit, in collaboration with the Division's Women's Rights Unit, organized a subregional training workshop on support in the preparation of State parties' reports to be submitted to CEDAW, which was held at Cotonou, Benin, on 8 and 9 July 1999. The workshop targeted French-speaking countries in Africa that had ratified the Convention but not yet submitted an initial report. The objectives were to provide Governments with guidelines on how to prepare initial or periodic reports to be submitted to the Committee under article 18 of the Convention. The workshop also provided an opportunity for participating countries to share and exchange their views and experiences on obstacles and challenges in reporting as well as successful strategies to overcome obstacles. A follow-up in-country training was conducted for the government officials of Benin from 19 to 28 July 1999. UNDP provided the collaboration and logistical support for the workshop and in-country training. The Unit is planning to organize similar training workshops for the remaining countries that have ratified the Convention but not yet submitted an initial report. A new version of the CEDAW training manual mentioned in paragraph 25 above has been updated by the Division for the Advancement of Women for use by the Unit in its training of Governments. The interregional

adviser also provides technical support to Governments at their request.

97. In collaboration with the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa and other units within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Unit is implementing a UNDP-funded project on the assessment of gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women in sub-Saharan Africa, which aims at reviewing the extent to which gender perspectives are integrated in the operational activities at the national level in 22 countries. A technical review committee convened by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Unit, gathering technical experts and representatives from various United Nations agencies, will assess the outcome and recommendations of the study.

98. The relatively new function of providing gender advisory services can potentially play a major role in enhancing the overall effectiveness of the subprogramme. Some of the projects undertaken by the Unit, such as provision of training, lend themselves to follow-up evaluation 6 or 12 months later; the Division for the Advancement of Women has not yet taken that initiative.

IX. Conclusions and recommendations

99. The Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women have contributed significantly to the impact referred to in paragraph 3 above. In this regard, activities facilitating the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and an imaginative and productive use of the Internet deserve special mention. The programme's resources are stretched over many activities which support effective work, and in which there is an interest by civil society larger than that for any other programme in the economic and social sectors.

100. The in-depth evaluation resulted in a number of observations, set out in the paragraphs cited below, on support of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, coordination, print publications, the WomenWatch and the Division for the Advancement of Women web sites, and collaboration with NGOs. In this connection, the Office of Internal Oversight Services makes the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1
Support to enhance the effectiveness of the reporting mechanism of CEDAW

(a) *Backlog*. The secretariat of the Committee should further study ways to reduce the backlog and propose to the Committee targets and methods to achieve this objective. (See paras. 24 and 38 above.)

(b) *Overdue reports*. The secretariat should propose to the Committee a plan to reduce the number of overdue reports by considering the adoption of procedures that have been used by other treaty bodies, such as sending periodic reminders to States parties and encouraging those States parties that have never submitted an initial report (54 as of December 1999) to request technical assistance. (See paras. 24 and 38 above.)

(c) Given the emphasis placed by the Committee on openness to NGOs, the secretariat should ensure that concerned NGOs are informed of a State party's presentation of its report sufficiently in advance to allow them to participate in the meetings, that they are provided with the relevant guidelines and that they are encouraged to translate their reports into the working languages of the United Nations. (See paras. 25-26 above.)

Recommendation 2
Enhance efforts to promote the work of CEDAW

The Division for the Advancement of Women should indicate on its web site that the summary records of CEDAW are available in hard copy and how interested parties can obtain them, and publication of *The Work of CEDAW* should be terminated. (See paras. 29-30 above.)

Recommendation 3
A new Secretary-General's bulletin

In order to encourage the implementation of the newly revised special measures, ST/SGB/282 of 5 January 1996 should be revised to reflect the stronger measures endorsed by the General Assembly. (See para. 58 above.)

Recommendation 4
Improving coordination within the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (See paras. 60-62 above.)

(a) In order to ensure regular contact, the Division for the Advancement of Women should propose to the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality the creation of an electronic information network among members of the IACWGE for monthly e-mail briefings on substantive issues discussed at Headquarters and New York-based agencies and follow-up to task force discussions. This would facilitate more regular sharing of information.

(b) The Division for the Advancement of Women should propose to the IACWGE extending the duration of IACWGE meetings by one or two days or have a one- or two-day "preparatory" to IACWGE with specific items for in-depth discussion.

Recommendation 5
Greater coordination between the Division for the Advancement of Women and other United Nations programmes and entities (See paras. 64-67 above.)

(a) Regular discussions of strategies and annual work plans should take place at the senior level between the Division for the Advancement of Women and other United Nations programmes and entities, taking into consideration their comparative advantage.

(b) United Nations entities providing gender advisory services, such as the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNDP, UNIFEM and the regional commissions, should exchange work plans and take other measures to ensure that activities in this area are well coordinated and reflect comparative advantage.

Recommendation 6
Marketing and distribution of the Division for the Advancement of Women publications

In close collaboration with other relevant departments, the Division for the Advancement of Women should identify potential target audiences and develop different marketing and distribution approaches for various types of publications, based on the commercial potential of the publication (see paras. 71-78 above):

(a) With respect to publications that are issued as sales publications as a matter of record or for other non-commercial reasons, print runs should be small; the information contained in these publications should be posted on the WomenWatch web site. (See para. 77 above.)

(b) Publications that are of potential commercial significance should be financed, produced, advertised and sold so as to maximize sales revenues, with on-line information made available in a manner that protects the United Nations commercial interest in those publications. For these, advertising, book launches and other publicity events should be organized. (See para. 74 above.)

(c) Not-for-sale publications should be issued in an inexpensive print form and included on the WomenWatch web site. (See para. 76 above.)

Recommendation 7
Marketing data

The Marketing and Sales Section, Department of Public Information, should provide periodic feedback to author departments on sales. (See paras. 77-78 above.)

Recommendation 8
Use of professional journals

The staff of the Division for the Advancement of Women should encourage publication of articles in professional journals on the work of the programme on the advancement of women. (See para. 79 above.)

Recommendation 9
WomenWatch and the Division for the Advancement of Women web sites

The WomenWatch and the Division for the Advancement of Women web sites should be improved in the following ways (see paras. 80-88 above):

(a) The end-user's profiles and needs should be determined so that they can be better met through the information and design of the web site (see para. 87 above);

(b) In posting available documents on the site, priority should be given to time-sensitive material such as agendas for upcoming meetings (see paras. 86-87 above);

(c) The feasibility of extending on-line dialogues to include preparatory processes of Commission on the Status of Women sessions to allow more in-depth participation in these events should be explored. (See paras. 85, 88-89 above.)

Recommendation 10
Enhanced collaboration with non-governmental organizations

In the light of the high level of interest of NGOs and the importance placed on their support and involvement, the following measures should be taken to enable the Division for the Advancement of Women to facilitate adequately their participation in relevant United Nations activities. (See paras. 89-93 above.)

(a) Increase the means and frequency of communication between the Division for the Advancement of Women and NGOs, including more briefings on relevant issues and more open dialogue through various means (e.g., meetings, on-line discussions). (See paras. 92-93 above.)

(b) Establish clear, defined and agreed-upon modalities for the selection of NGOs to address the Commission on the Status of Women and for NGO collaboration with the Division for the Advancement of Women. (See para. 92 above.)

(*Signed*) Hans **Corell**
Under-Secretary-General
Overseer, Office of Internal Oversight Services

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/52/16), para. 306.

[2] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995*, United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[3] Ibid., annex II, chap. III.

[4] Ibid., resolution 1, annex I.

[5] Ibid., annex II, chap. V, para. 287.

[6] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/54/38/Rev.1), part one, chap. V.

[7] CEDAW/C/IND/1, introduction.

[8] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1), chap. IV, sect. A.

[9] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.XVII.10.

[10] See D. Gierycz, "Women in Decision Making: Can we change the status quo?" in: I. Breines, D. Gierycz and B. Reardon, *Towards a Women's Agenda for a Culture of Peace* (Paris, UNESCO, 1999).

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Programme questions: evaluation

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-seventh session on the evaluation of the statistics programme

Note by the Secretary-General

In conformity with paragraph 5 (e) (I) of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, and with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 54/244 of 23 December 1999, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-seventh session on the evaluation of the statistics programme (E/AC.51/1997/2). The report has been reviewed by the relevant departments and offices. The Secretary-General takes note of its findings and concurs with its conclusions.

* E/AC.51/2000/1.

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Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-seventh session on the evaluation of the statistics programme

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session to review the implementation of its recommendations three years after taking decisions on an in-depth evaluation of the statistics programme.

Efforts to implement the recommendations of the in-depth evaluation are reviewed in terms of four topics: the transition from a focus on publications to a focus on customized services; publications; coordination of the programme and services; and utilization of staff resources. The review concludes that the United Nations Statistics Division has made a concerted effort to implement the recommendations of the in-depth evaluation as endorsed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

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I. Introduction

1. In 1994, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) scheduled an in-depth evaluation of the United Nations statistics programme for 1997.[1] One of the considerations listed in the note by the Secretariat on topics for future in-depth evaluations (see E/AC.51/1993/6, para. 8) was the need to examine a programme generally considered successful in order to learn lessons applicable to related programmes. The statistics programme was selected for evaluation with that criterion in mind.

2. The in-depth evaluation made 10 recommendations in three broad areas:

(a) Transition from focus on publications to focus on customized services;

(b) Publications;

(c) Coordination of programme and services.

At its thirty-seventh session, CPC considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the in-depth evaluation of the statistics programme, commended the report for its thorough review of the programme, and endorsed the recommendations in the report on the understanding that the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division would propose an implementation plan and timetable at the 1998 meeting of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination of the Statistical Commission. The Committee's endorsement was made on the understanding that the United Nations would continue to issue a number of publications as a matter of record and for other non-commercial reasons.[2]

II. Transition from focus on publications to focus on customized services

A. Development of UNESIS

Recommendation 1
User needs and the development of UNESIS

The Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis should seek the views of representatives of the main user groups on their needs and utilize that information in the design of UNESIS.

3. A progress report on the United Nations Economic and Social Information System (UNESIS) database (E/CN.3/1999/27) was submitted to the Statistical Commission for review at its thirtieth session. It provided a description of the databases and support services included in the system, as well as a description of the standards and guidelines utilized, and of collaboration with the regional commissions. The development of UNESIS is being carried out in cooperation with other parts of the global statistical system, which are both data providers and users. A consultation with data providers took place in the last quarter of 1999.

B. On-line access

Recommendation 2
On-line access to United Nations statistical databases

(a) It should be the general policy of the United Nations that statistical data and associated analysis is to be made available free of charge on-line, with exceptions only to protect significant commercial value or confidentiality.

(b) The Statistics Division and the Department of Public Information should explore the feasibility of establishing on-line access to UNESIS databases at regional statistical institutes and United Nations information centres.

4. The United Nations Statistics Division follows dissemination policies set by the United Nations Publications Board. The Division consults with the Sales and Marketing Section of the Department of Public Information to determine which data sets represent "significant commercial value"; data sets comprising significant commercial value are the International Commodity Trade Databases and the databases of the *Demographic Yearbook*, the *Statistical Yearbook*, the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* and the System of National Accounts. Of less but still significant commercial value are databases of energy statistics, industrial commodity production, the *World Statistics Pocketbook*, and the Women's Indicators Database on CD-ROM. Of limited commercial value are energy balances statistics and the methodological publications, with some widely used exceptions, such as population census recommendations. The only confidential data set in the Division is the national

accounts estimates prepared for the Committee on Contributions.

5. The Statistics Division makes data sets on the Internet, including its protected data sets, available on request at no charge to United Nations information centres and regional statistical institutes. The UNESIS system will allow the same access as soon as an Internet version is available. The Division will continue to expand the availability of information on the Internet, allowing it to decrease the preparation and dissemination of limited circulation print materials. Material which is more economically distributed on the Internet has been identified and included in plans for the implementation of UNESIS as a principal data dissemination vehicle of the Division. A working version of UNESIS is being tested on the Intranet. The full Internet implementation of UNESIS for outside use will be available in the second quarter of 2000. Planning has been undertaken with the optical disk system to make methodological publications available on the Internet in 2000.

C. User needs

Recommendation 3
Tracking and responding to needs of users

The statistics divisions in the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the regional commissions should actively seek to determine existing and potential demand for their services through such means as focus groups of users; analysis of utilization patterns of on-line users; surveys of national statistical offices; and surveys of organizations requesting customized services.

6. The United Nations Statistics Division works closely with users requesting specialized services and customized data paid through the revenue account. All users are consulted by phone, letter, facsimile or e-mail to meet requests to their satisfaction.

7. The Division has prepared a general questionnaire for a review by national statistical offices, regional offices and selected other users of data of their requirements for the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* (print and on-line). The questionnaire on the *Bulletin* was distributed in March 1999; addressees were requested to indicate the priority that the Division should give in the future to the compilation and dissemination of 21 key indicators. A total of 58 responses had been received by the end of January 2000, and analysis of these responses is still in progress to date.

8. The Division cooperates with the Sales and Marketing Section of the Department of Public Information in conducting user surveys and focus groups on selected publications in statistics, as described below. These surveys do not cover official free distribution; a questionnaire to those who receive Division publications at no cost will be distributed in the first quarter of 2000. In the future, the Division plans to participate, as resources permit, in several user forums per year to discuss user needs.

9. The Sales and Marketing Section of the Department of Public Information has undertaken two user evaluation studies, a limited telephone survey of one-time buyers of the *Demographic Yearbook*, and a focus group of university research libraries on United Nations publications generally, and is preparing one on the *World Statistics Pocketbook*.

10. The first user survey was based on telephone interviews with customers in the United States who purchased volume 47 of the *Demographic Yearbook*, but did not purchase volumes 48-49. The purpose of the study was to find out why customers had not purchased the latest editions of the *Yearbook*, and what would it take for them to purchase it again. It was found that most customers who did not purchase the latest edition fall into the category of "one-time buyers" who purchase the publication when there is a specific need for the information. Examples of such one-time buyers include bookstores which order on the request of customers and commercial and non-profit entities who use the information for a specific project.

11. For the second user survey, the Sales and Marketing Section hired a consulting firm to organize a focus group of key users to assess the value and usefulness of United Nations publications, including statistical publications, and the marketing activities used to promote them. The focus group was held during the American Library Association's annual meeting in June 1998. The survey provided insights into such issues as factors affecting serial and book selection and the purchase of electronic products. Librarians regard the United Nations publications web site as outstanding.

12. In addition to the activity described above, the Statistical Services Branch is currently organizing a user review and focus group on the following products which had been produced or were in preparation:

(a) *Statistical Yearbook* CD-ROM;

(b) Second generation of the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* on-line for the Internet;

(c) United Nations database for the Internet.

13. In the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), user needs are considered from two perspectives, first the regional client focus and secondly needs at the country level. Concerning regional client focus, the statistics component of the Development Information Services Division has, in the course of the last 12 months, been engaged in an activity on rethinking statistics in ECA as part of the reform measures currently in progress in ECA. This has entailed a review of the needs of user divisions in ECA with a view to strengthening the implementation of the different components of the regional programme. Second, requests of member States at regional and national workshops both in the participant workshop evaluations and in the collective recommendations as adopted by the meetings have been a valuable source of information for refocusing the ECA response to user needs. With respect to user needs at the country level, ECA has prepared and disseminated guidelines for needs assessment and strategy development that have been used by member States to conduct their needs assessments. In addition, a task force to evaluate the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s has commenced operations. A team of six consultants will visit selected African countries and hold consultations with both producers and users of data and determine the extent to which national statistical programmes are established on the basis of national user needs assessments as recommended in the Plan of Action. The results of the evaluation will be used in formulating a strategy for statistical development in Africa in the year 2000 and beyond. The evaluation is a collaborative exercise being implemented jointly by ECA, member States and development partners within the framework of the Coordinating Committee on African Statistical Development. In addition, in 1998 and 1999 ECA conducted two comprehensive surveys of national statistical services which provided a review of problems, activities and developments in the region.

14. Consultation of users is a standard practice at the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Statistics Division. Questionnaires on the degree of satisfaction of the users are regularly distributed at the end of the plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES), and of the other meetings in the CES work programme.

15. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) conducted a user survey for the *Social Panorama of Latin America*, a publication which is prepared jointly by the Economic Projections and Statistical Division and the Social Division of ECLAC. It contained questions on the usefulness of the analysis and the information, on its quality and on the need to include other topics. The report on the survey findings, which were very positive for the *Panorama*, was prepared in 1998. Other indicators for 1999 stem from the records obtained from visitors to the ECLAC web site. Statistical products posted are among the most consulted, particularly those on short-term databases and reports.

16. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has been conducting user surveys on sales statistical publications, but the response rates to these user surveys have been low. The respondents are concentrated among the government users and those who receive ESCAP publications on a complimentary basis.

17. In the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), two bulletins — *National Accounts*, No. 18 and *Vital Statistics in ESCWA Member States*, No. 2, and a database on gender statistics were evaluated by outside experts and focal points in member States. ESCWA also distributed questionnaires among participants to four workshops on industrial and construction statistics; vital statistics and civil registration systems in ESCWA member States; gender statistics in the Arab countries; and national accounts.

D. Regional information systems

Recommendation 4
Improvement in regional information systems

The Information Technology Services Division, Department of Administration and Management, should assist the Statistics Division and the regional commissions in the development

of compatible standards for information technology systems.

18. The United Nations Statistics Division is actively promoting the UNESIS platform for all regional statistics divisions and provides assistance in organizing training for programmers and database administrators associated with developing and maintaining statistical information systems. The Information Technology Services Division provides assistance to the Division in establishing standards for hardware and procurement as well as in promoting new technologies. Consultations have been undertaken through missions to ECE, ECLAC and ESCWA, and by letter and through personal contacts with ECA and ESCAP. The methodology of UNESIS will be fully documented and released for further consultations in the first quarter of 2000.

III. Publications

A. Policy

Recommendation 5
Statistical publications policy

Statistical publications of the United Nations should consist of:

(a) Publications that are issued as sales publications as a matter of record or for other non-commercial reasons in appropriate small print runs. The same information can be issued additionally in mimeograph or similar inexpensive print or machine-readable forms. There should be no embargo on free distribution of the same information on-line;

(b) Publications that are of commercial significance, and which are financed, produced, advertised and sold so as to maximize sales revenue, with on-line information made available in a manner that protects the United Nations commercial interest in those publications.

Sales publications with a market demand that is not commercially viable and for which the United Nations does not have a strong non-commercial interest in continued publication should be discontinued. The information in them should be made available on-line or in machine-readable products.

19. The United Nations Statistics Division currently distributes various methodological publications, newsletters, technical information and metadata related documents in electronic format freely downloadable from the Division's Internet web site. All publications are provided at no cost to member States and small print runs are available for a fee to private persons or organizations. Technical information of no commercial value is routinely distributed from limited print runs and on the Internet.

20. Efforts are made to identify the commercial interests of the organization as indicated in paragraph 4 above. Division publications of commercial significance are promoted via the Internet, newsletters, United Nations publications catalogues and other promotional activities.

21. In June 1998, the United Nations publications programme and publishing policies were examined by the Committee for Programme and Coordination in the context of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit contained in document A/51/946 and the Secretary-General's comments thereupon (A/52/685). The discussion and conclusions and recommendations[3] make clear that despite the advances being made in electronic publishing by the Secretariat, the continuance of printed publications remained important for delegations.

22. The Publication Board's Working Group on Electronic Publishing, chaired by the Chief of the Statistical Services Branch, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and composed of representatives from all Headquarters departments, has developed guidelines to coordinate the Secretariat's Internet services. General policy issues as well as technical elements of presentation are covered. The guidelines are designed to assist departments and offices within the Secretariat to develop their web pages and standardize design, style and content.

B. Evaluation

Recommendation 6
Evaluation of publications

All United Nations statistical publications should be subject to reviews similar to those described in paragraph 70 [of the in-depth evaluation (E/AC.51/1997/2)].

23. For the implementation of recommendation 6, see paragraphs 6-17 above.

IV. Coordination of programme and services

A. Integrated presentation

Recommendation 7
Integrated presentation

The Statistics Division, in cooperation with the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, should prepare an experimental integrated presentation in order to identify opportunities for joint activities and collaboration in areas of common concern. A report on this experiment should be submitted to the next meeting of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination of the Statistical Commission.

24. A pilot version of integrated presentation contains the following features:

(a) It will be a first step in the direction of an integrated presentation of methodological work;

(b) It will include previously produced methodological publications;

(c) It will include linkages to home pages of city groups;

(d) Actual texts of classifications will be incorporated.

A report on the integrated presentation was submitted to the Statistical Commission at its thirty-first session (E/CN.3/2000/20).

25. The Conference of European Statisticians has developed since the early 1990s an integrated presentation of the statistical work programmes of the major international organizations active in the field of statistics in the ECE region. The integrated presentation covers all fields of statistical activities, suitably classified in six main headings, and includes the activities of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United Nations Statistics Division, the International Monetary Fund, the Commonwealth of Independent States and other major international organizations. The updating follows an annual cycle, while there is an in-depth review of the various programme elements every two years. The integrated presentation is a tool for information and coordination; it permits the identification and analysis of gaps and overlaps. The integrated presentation of the United Nations Statistics Division is coordinated with ECE.

B. Analytical services

Recommendation 8
Analytical services to Departments

In environmental statistics, the Statistics Division has already established a joint task force with the Division for Sustainable Development for the development of policy-oriented indicators. Similar arrangements should be established with other units of the Secretariat and the specialized agencies with reporting responsibilities for the refinement and compilation of internationally comparable socio-economic indicators.

26. The United Nations Statistics Division continues to cooperate with other divisions in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other organizations to enhance existing joint task forces both within and outside the United Nations system.

27. The report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities submitted to the Statistical Commission at its thirtieth session (see E/CN.3/1999/22, para. 2 (a)) lists a number of activities of the type envisioned in the recommendation, relating to:

- The development of an inventory of indicators produced by the United Nations system;
- The completion of a development indicators web site;
- The rationalization and harmonization of indicators for the common country assessment, and the continuation of the core indicators programme;
- Harmonization and rationalization in the area of environmental indicators.

28. A detailed report providing a critical review of the development of indicators in the context of

conference follow-up (previously reviewed by an expert group meeting on development indicators and the Statistical Commission) was submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999 (E/1999/11). The United Nations Statistics Division was the lead division for this project. The report provided descriptions of indicator programmes at the international level related to recent United Nations conferences, an assessment of gaps and inconsistencies in this data and descriptions of the situation at the country level. It also provided a discussion of means of implementation and set out a number of possible next steps.

C. Dissemination of innovations

Recommendation 9
Dissemination of innovations and lessons learned

The experiences of the regional commissions, such as those described in paragraphs 59 and 60 [of the in-depth evaluation (E/AC.51/1997/2)], should be systematically reviewed for possible wider adoption. The regional commissions should establish regular joint symposiums on their experiences.

29. The paragraphs referred to in recommendation 9 of the in-depth evaluation noted the work of ECLAC in producing the 1995 *Social Panorama of Latin America*, its development of short-term economic indicators and poverty estimates and the consolidation of statistical services in ECE. Descriptions of continuing work on these and other innovations in the statistical programmes of the regional commissions are to be found on the web sites of each commission.

30. The United Nations Statistics Division is providing methodological assistance in developing statistical information systems for offices away from Headquarters and in the organization of training for staff involved in the development of statistical systems. Representatives of the Division are active participants of regional-level meetings and workshops.

D. Review

Recommendation 10
Review by Statistical Commission

The present report, and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on it, should be submitted to the next meeting of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination of the Statistical Commission.

31. The in-depth evaluation (E/AC.51/1997/2) was presented to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination in February 1998. The Working Group approved the implementation plan and timetable proposed by the United Nations Statistics Division for realizing the recommendations of the in-depth review of the statistics programme, and at its thirtieth session, the Statistical Commission took note of the plan and timetable.[4]

V. Utilization of staff resources

32. In the 1994-1995 biennium, the distribution of the programme's activities and resources, measured by the proportion of Professional staff time, was heavily concentrated on the production of recurrent publications, which accounted for more than 50 per cent of the total professional effort other than technical assistance. In reality, the proportion of resources allocated to publications was significantly higher since most of the General Service staff (66 of the 135 staff) were largely engaged in the processing of the statistical data used in the production of recurrent publications. The in-depth evaluation proposed that a strategy is needed to make a shift in allocations, over the four-year period of the medium-term plan, to a focus on services determined by user needs and a knowledge of utilization patterns.

33. A comparison of utilization patterns in 1998-1999 with those of 1994-1995 indicates that the strategic shift in the allocation of staff time proposed in the in-depth evaluation is taking place.

Actual utilization of Professional work/months in the United Nations Statistics Division, 1994-1995 and 1998-1999

Major categories of outputs and services	*Baseline: 1994-1995 (E/AC.51/1997/2, table 4)*		*1998-1999 (preliminary estimate)*	
	Professional work/months (RB + XB)	*Percentage*	*Professional work/months (RB + XB)*	*Percentage*
Methodological activity	289	24.8	316	26.3
Parliamentary services	97	8.3	100	8.3
Data processing	176	15.1	278	23.1
Customized services to users	-[a]	-[a]	-[a]	-[a]
Publications	605	51.8	508	42.3
Total	**1 167**	**100.0**	**1 202**	**100.0**
Memorandum item				
Technical cooperation				
Regular budget (RB)	244	59.0	96	44.4
Extrabudgetary (XB)	169	41.0	120	55.5
Total	**413**	**100.0**	**216**	**100.0**

[a] Not identified separately.

VI. Conclusions

34. The implementation plan and schedule presented to the Working Group of the Statistical Commission and subsequently to the Commission itself by the United Nations Statistics Division, and the actions taken, represent a concerted effort to implement the recommendations of the in-depth evaluation as endorsed by CPC.

(*Signed*) Hans **Corell**
Under-Secretary-General
Overseer, Office of Internal Oversight Services

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/49/16, part I), para. 34.

[2] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/52/16, part I), paras. 292-294.

[3] Ibid., *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/53/16, part I), paras. 334-352.

[4] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 4* (E/1999/24), paras. 139-142.

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Programme questions: evaluation

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-seventh session on the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs

Note by the Secretary-General

In conformity with paragraph 5 (e) (i) of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, and with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 54/244 of 23 December 1999, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-seventh session on the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, dated 24 March 2000. The report has been reviewed by the relevant departments, programmes and agencies. The Secretary-General takes note of its findings and concurs with its recommendations.

* E/AC.51/2000/1.

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Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-seventh session on the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session to review the implementation of its recommendations three years after taking a decision on an in-depth evaluation.

Implementation of the recommendations was facilitated by the restructuring, in 1997 and 1998, of the Secretariat machinery responsible for coordinating humanitarian assistance which followed the same approach to reform recommended in the in-depth evaluation. The sustained efforts of the new Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, established in 1998, brought about significant progress on the issues addressed in these recommendations. Support to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee — the main consultative body for humanitarian agencies — has been enhanced. The mechanisms to plan and monitor emergency assistance have been improved. Progress has been made in addressing gaps in the response to emergencies and in the advocacy of humanitarian concerns.

There remain, however, a number of significant problems. The rapid response to emergencies is still hindered by the absence of special United Nations administrative and financial rules and procedures suited to emergency situations. The work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee needs to be more decision-oriented. An effective procedure for sharing lessons learned is still required. Recommendations are made to address these issues.

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I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-seventh session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (E/AC.51/1997/3). The Committee endorsed recommendations 1 to 13 and 14 (b) to 22 as contained in the report.

2. In 1997, in his programme for reform, the Secretary-General, considering that "improvements are necessary in the coordination and rapid deployment of United Nations humanitarian responses", instituted "a major restructuring of Secretariat machinery responsible for coordinating humanitarian assistance" (A/51/950, paras. 76-77). The restructuring included the establishment of an office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator to replace the Department of Humanitarian Affairs; the transfer of the Department's operational responsibilities to other appropriate entities that provide assistance on the ground; focusing the action of the Emergency Relief Coordinator on the core functions identified in General Assembly resolution 46/182, namely development of humanitarian policy, advocacy of humanitarian concerns and coordination of humanitarian emergency response. One of the objectives of the restructuring was the strengthening of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which would continue to be the main consultative body for humanitarian agencies, chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator. An IASC Steering Committee would be established to enhance a rapid response capacity. In January 1998, following the approval by the General Assembly, in its resolution 52/12 B, of the proposals of the Secretary-General, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was reorganized and renamed the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The head of the Office has dual responsibilities as the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and as the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

3. The general intent of the restructuring and the different measures adopted followed the same approach to reform recommended in the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (E/AC.51/1997/3). This approach, endorsed by CPC, was "(a) to strengthen the capacity of the Department to support effectively inter-agency cooperation and coordination through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Emergency Relief Coordinator; and (b) to ensure that the Department did not become involved in operational activities, which were more effectively carried out by the operational programmes and agencies that were represented in the Standing Committee" (A/52/16,[1] para. 301).

4. The present triennial review, conducted by the Central Evaluation Unit of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to determine the extent to which the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination have been implemented, is based, as was the case with past triennial reviews, on a review of the relevant documentation, information submitted by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and members of the IASC, and consultations by the Central Evaluation Unit for clarification and verification purposes.

II. Findings

A. Natural and other sudden-onset disasters

1. Emergency relief in the wake of natural and other sudden-onset disasters

Recommendation 1
Special United Nations emergency rules and procedures

(a) In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 46/182, special emergency rules and procedures should be developed by the end of 1997. These special emergency rules and procedures would incorporate the adaptations already made with regard to financial procedures as they relate to the requirements of Department of Humanitarian Affairs emergency activities, address related issues concerning personnel and procurement arrangements, and make any other adjustments needed;

(b) Pending development of such rules, existing financial procedures would remain in place but a standing delegation of authority to cover other processes for which existing rules are most detrimental to the Department's effectiveness should be granted to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and

Emergency Relief Coordinator and his designated representatives; the authority delegated should be used in a manner that is consistent with United Nations policies in areas such as recruitment of personnel and geographical and gender balance, or procurement of goods for disaster relief and international bidding.

5. In several of its resolutions, 37/144 of 17 December 1982, 39/207 of 17 December 1984 and 45/221 of 21 December 1990, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to adapt existing United Nations procedures "in order to permit the Office [of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator] to respond in a timely manner to the special and immediate requirements of countries exposed to sudden disasters" (resolution 45/221, para. 3). In 1991, in paragraph 29 of the annex to resolution 46/182 — the resolution which led to the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, now the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs — the General Assembly considered that "special emergency rules and procedures should be developed by the United Nations to enable all organizations to disburse quickly emergency funds, and to procure emergency supplies and equipment, as well as to recruit emergency staff". The 1997 in-depth evaluation of Department of Humanitarian Affairs noted that the Secretariat had not developed the special emergency rules and procedures requested by the Assembly, and observed that, although some progress had been made through a joint effort of the Department, of Geneva administrative services and of the Department of Administration and Management in New York, and the adoption of special arrangements, nonetheless, "as a consequence of the absence of appropriate rules, existing rules are frequently applied in a manner that does not take into account the nature of the Department's activities" (E/AC.51/1997/3, para. 10).

6. Special emergency rules and procedures had not been developed by the end of 1997, as recommended in recommendation 1 (a). This lack of action was noted in the 1998 and 1999 Office of Internal Oversight Services annual reports (A/53/428, appendix I, and A/54/393, appendix I). The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continued to encounter administrative difficulties and delays in providing speedy support to the field. In paragraph 13 of agreed conclusions 1998/1,[2] the Economic and Social Council reiterated the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/182, and called "upon the Secretary-General to develop emergency rules and procedures to ensure a rapid response to humanitarian crises". During 1998, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs made proposals for the establishment of a set of emergency rules and procedures. Consultations between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the Controller resulted in delegation of the financial authority to issue allotments, effective 1 January 1999, and to accept contributions, agreements and pledges for funding of emergencies, effective 7 January 1999. The delegation of authority to recruit emergency personnel under the 200 and 300 series of the Staff Rules particularly during the critical initial period of emergencies was not granted to the Emergency Relief Coordinator. This has resulted in considerable delays in the recruitment and deployment of emergency personnel in recent crisis situations, such as in Kosovo and East Timor, as well as in the extension of contracts of staff already deployed in the field. It is concluded from the above that, early in 2000, the special arrangements agreed upon earlier had been expanded but that special emergency rules and procedures had not been adopted as yet.

7. The standing delegation of authority recommended in recommendation 1 (b) as a transitory measure, pending the adoption of special emergency rules and procedures, was not granted. Delays still persist between the time a decision is taken that emergency funds will be made available and the actual receipt by field offices. In the most common situation, when the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs interacts with UNDP Resident Representatives coordinating the United Nations response at the field level, the Office needs to process a number of financial documents through Geneva Administrative Services and the UNDP Accounts and Treasury, in New York, as well as to provide evidence that rapid processing of the documents is required for effective response to an emergency situation. After processing of the required documents, the UNDP Treasury sends the funds to the UNDP field office concerned. UNDP field offices are not authorized to incur expenditures upon receipt of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs telex advising that the remittance of funds is in progress. The situation is sometimes more complex when there is no UNDP field presence in the country where the emergency occurred. In its comments on a

draft of the present report, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated that the result of the current sluggish and non-user-friendly administrative structure is slow humanitarian response to both natural and complex disasters. In this connection, it is recalled that General Assembly resolution 46/182 was concerned with the capacity of all organizations of the United Nations system to respond to calls for emergency assistance.

2. Disaster reduction

Recommendation 2
Overall strategy for Department of Humanitarian Affairs support to disaster reduction

To support the practical application of disaster reduction policies, the Disaster Mitigation Branch should, primarily: (a) provide international and regional programmes and agencies involved in the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade with the required guidance in the development of disaster management plans and strategies; and (b) monitor actions of these programmes and agencies in relation to the targets of the Framework.

8. As a result of the reorganization of the Secretariat (see para. 2 above), the functions related to coordination of natural disaster relief remained with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, under the responsibility of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, while the responsibilities of the Emergency Relief Coordinator for operational activities for natural disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness which "relate to national capabilities and are more appropriately situated in UNDP" (A/51/950, para. 187) were transferred to UNDP early in 1998, in pursuance of paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 52/12 B. In addition to the functional responsibilities of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs relevant to natural-disaster prevention and emergency response, as described in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals" (A/52/303, paras. 25.6 and 25.8), activities related to the implementation of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction remained the responsibility of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, effected through the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction which is "responsible for the day-to-day coordination of Decade activities" (resolution 44/236, annex, para. 14 (b)).

9. At the end of 1997, the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction presented an action plan for 1998-1999, the final phase of the Decade. The Action Plan offered guidance with regard to the development of national disaster management plans and strategies integrated into development plans. Although there was no systematic monitoring of the relevant actions of international and regional programmes and agencies, the Decade Inter-Agency Steering Committee served as a forum to discuss disaster reduction policies, strategic applications and programmes of action among the United Nations partners. In addition, the Action Plan recognized the responsibilities of the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction as Task Manager for natural disasters within the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, with particular emphasis on the disaster reduction needs of small island developing States (resolution 51/183, para. 14). The Action Plan also provided for regional and issue-specific information exchange on achievements of the Decade, by means of respective preparatory conferences feeding into the Decade's concluding event, the Programme Forum held at Geneva from 5 to 9 July 1999. Finally, the Action Plan also provided for an independent assessment of the achievements of the Decade by the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction Scientific and Technical Committee. The assessment, submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session through the Economic and Social Council in 1999, included observations on future needs and areas of greatest priority "for which lead organizations in the United Nations system should be designated ... in recognition of the inherent cross-cutting nature of the subject of disaster prevention" (A/54/132/Add.1-E/1999/80/Add.1, paras. 62 and 66). In his annual report on the work of the Organization in 1999, the Secretary-General stated that "major improvements in risk-assessment and loss-estimation methodologies have been identified through the International Decade", and that the experience of the Decade "shows that a key to successful longer-term prevention strategies is broad-based cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation". On this subject, the report concluded that "it is

essential that the pioneering work carried out during the ... Decade ... be continued".[3]

Recommendation 3
Department of Humanitarian Affairs support to in-country coordination of disaster reduction programmes

Within the Department, activities of the disaster management training programme and of the Disaster Reduction Division should be jointly planned. Concerning its partners, the Department should request the executive heads of the agencies involved in disaster reduction programmes to issue by the end of 1997 clear directives to their field offices instructing them to participate actively in the Resident Coordinator system and the disaster management team mechanism.

10. Support to in-country coordination of United Nations disaster reduction programmes has been divested from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to UNDP. The new arrangement makes possible a fuller integration of disaster reduction management into development programmes, which was the purpose of recommendation 3. UNDP has undertaken to plan jointly activities of the Disaster Management Training Programme with integrated capacity-building programmes in a range of countries. In 1999, the Administrative Committee on Coordination's Organizational Committee noted "the growing awareness among different organizations of the severe negative consequences of disasters for sustainable development and the initiatives taken by them, including, *inter alia*, those by the World Bank, to strengthen their capacity to participate in natural disaster preparedness, prevention and mitigation activities" (ACC/1999/2, para. 59 (f)).

Recommendation 4
Department of Humanitarian Affairs support to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

The Department should work more closely with UNDP in seeking to raise the funds needed to support the activities of the Decade secretariat between 1997 and the closing of the Decade, in particular: (a) to establish an information network between partners of the International Framework of Action for the Decade, including early warning aspects of disaster reduction; and (b) to promote research on the economic aspects of disasters.

11. During 1997, the Decade secretariat focused on issues of early warning and electronically managed dissemination of disaster reduction information. The 1998 scientific conference held at Potsdam, Germany, discussed these issues and identified local experiences which can best improve the effectiveness of early warning systems. Research on the economic impact of natural disasters was one of the Decade activities during the last two years of the Decade. In particular, the Decade secretariat coordinated the Inter-Agency Task Force on the El Niño phenomenon and its consequences. There were no UNDP/Decade secretariat joint fund-raising initiatives to fund activities in this area. UNDP, however, provided financial support to the Potsdam conference as well as global and regional meetings that led to the closing of the Decade. UNDP also funded research on the social and economic impact of the El Niño phenomenon.

Recommendation 5
Follow-up to the Decade

After the closing of the Decade, in 1999, continuation of the Department's responsibilities for future disaster reduction programmes agreed upon by the General Assembly should be dependent upon a review of the comparative advantages of increased support from UNDP and upon identification of adequate funding mechanisms.

12. The Decade Programme Forum organized in 1999, as part of the closing event of the Decade, adopted the strategy document entitled "A safer world in the twenty-first century: risk and disaster reduction". Regarding the successor arrangements for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the Secretary-General proposed that the agreed-upon arrangements — the establishment of an inter-agency task force and the continuation of the existing inter-agency secretariat for natural disaster reduction — implemented under the direct authority of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, "should be flexible in the initial period and adapted as experience is gained. The arrangements would, therefore, need to be reviewed after one year." The review would take into account, *inter alia*, the results of the "ongoing dialogue within the international disaster reduction community in the fields of climate change, scientific

research, environment, sustainable development and disaster reduction" (A/54/497, para. 14). This review should provide an opportunity to examine the comparative advantages of increased support from UNDP as recommended in recommendation 5. The General Assembly endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal in resolution 54/219.

B. Humanitarian emergencies requiring a coordinated response

1. Coordination mechanisms

Recommendation 6
Department of Humanitarian Affairs support to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/57, the Committee, under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, should serve as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination. The Department should strengthen its capacity and improve its performance to ensure that consensus in the Committee is reached quickly on coordination arrangements, division of operational responsibilities and related matters, and thereupon effectively implemented. The Department should prioritize its work in order to facilitate inter-agency cooperation in cases of complex emergencies.

13. IASC, established in 1992 and chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, concerns itself with those emergencies that exceed the mandate or capacity of any one agency and require a coordinated response. The relevant United Nations operational agencies and other humanitarian organizations participate in the work of the Committee. The 1999 Office of Internal Oversight Services inspection review of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (see para. 33 below) observed that, since the establishment of that Office, "various measures have contributed to strengthening the role of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee" (A/54/334, para. 17). In October 1998, the IASC issued its Recommendations related to the Review of the Capacity of the United Nations System for Humanitarian Assistance. The recommendations address a number of important issues such as coordination arrangements at the field level, internally displaced persons, local capacities and relief and development, and resource mobilization. The IASC Working Group "broadened the consultative process on policy issues by delegating to individual members lead responsibility in subsidiary working groups or reference groups for specific issues" (ibid., para. 19). For example, the reference group on gender and humanitarian action — established pursuant to the request of the Economic and Social Council in paragraph 8 of agreed conclusions 1998/1,[2] that the Emergency Relief Coordinator "ensure that a gender perspective is fully integrated into humanitarian activities and policies" — benefited from the work done on this issue by members of the IASC and by the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons. The group completed its work in less than a year, and finalized an inter-agency background paper and policy statement on gender, both of which were adopted by the IASC. The commitments to action agreed to in the policy statement now need to be implemented by the various agencies, and their effective monitoring needs to be achieved.

14. Since 1997, prioritization of IASC and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs work was facilitated by the renewed focus of the Emergency Relief Coordinator role on three core functions (see para. 2 above). However, prioritization was made more complex by the multiplication of various working groups and task forces — a dozen of such groups have been created with uneven results. At the end of 1999, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs proposed that several groups which had completed their tasks be discontinued, as responsibility for follow-up on their decisions can be assumed by the IASC Working Group. Several members of the IASC consider that, in the future, such groups should have clear terms of reference, with the desired outputs indicated, and sunset clauses. In addition, the Emergency Relief Coordinator participates in the work of the Executive Committees and the Development Group established in 1997 to strengthen policy and managerial coherence in the work of the Organization. The Emergency Relief Coordinator is the convener of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs. The Emergency Relief Coordinator is also a member of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security. The merging, in 1998, of the secretariats for IASC and Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs alleviated some concerns regarding overlap in mandates and duplication. On this issue, the IASC Working Group concluded that the overlap between the

terms of reference of the two bodies could not be completely eliminated and that the challenge, therefore, is to enhance the synergy between the two. Non-United Nations members of IASC welcomed recent steps taken by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to distribute to them the agendas of upcoming Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs meetings and to invite their inputs.

15. At the end of 1999, members of the IASC Working Group discussed ways to strengthen the IASC process. Beyond the insufficient implementation of agreed policies and guidelines, members identified problems in the adoption of agendas of meetings, which are not as decision-oriented as they could be; other problems included the insufficient involvement of country teams, and the difficulty of including all actors in the IASC process while remaining relevant to the key operational agencies. In 1997, in his programme for reform, the Secretary-General proposed that "in order to enhance a rapid response capacity based on coherent policy, a Steering Committee of IASC will be established, which will comprise UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross and a representative of the non-governmental organization community" (A/51/950, para. 190). The Steering Committee was not established in 1998, owing to the strong opposition of the agencies not included in the proposed list of members. In its comments to Central Evaluation Unit, one of the main United Nations operational agencies expressed concern that it had not yet been possible to establish the Steering Committee. One non-United Nations member of IASC stated that the lack of progress on the question is creating serious problems for agencies engaged in emergency operations. It observed that the IASC is too large to make rapid decisions during a fast-breaking emergency; informal processes fill the vacuum but often leave out of the decisions non-United Nations operational agencies. The establishment of the Steering Committee was discussed again at the IASC meeting in December 1999. No consensus was reached on the matter. The April 2000 IASC meeting is likely to revisit this subject. In its comments on a draft of the present report, WHO stated that the distinction between "operational" and "non-operational" United Nations agencies, especially when maintained at the country level, might bias and undermine effective United Nations coordination by excluding agencies otherwise committed to it. It also stated that the continuing perception that capacity for rapid response exists only in some United Nations agencies and that "informed response" such as rapid health assessment and advocacy on major public health threats is not "operational" is fundamentally untrue.

Recommendation 7
Streamlining of field coordination

In specific emergencies, the Emergency Relief Coordinator should recommend to the Committee coordination arrangements most likely to be rapidly operational; in cases where coordination by the resident coordinator is not considered the most effective arrangement, the designation of a lead agency, when appropriate and taking into account the general policy of the Committee on this matter, should be the second option reviewed; recommendations for other arrangements should give due consideration to keeping the additional costs of coordination to a minimum and to avoiding the multiplication of layers of responsibilities and reporting. Under all coordination arrangements, the field coordinator should be held accountable by the Emergency Relief Coordinator for the impartiality with which coordination functions are carried out.

16. In 1998, the Economic and Social Council agreed with the range of options that could be used for field coordination as recommended by IASC, that is: the current Resident Coordinator will be confirmed as the Humanitarian Coordinator should it be determined by the IASC that he/she has the necessary profile; in cases where it is determined that the Resident Coordinator does not have the necessary profile to be Humanitarian Coordinator, the IASC will appoint a Humanitarian Coordinator on a temporary basis until a person able to perform both functions is found to serve as Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator. However, in complex emergencies where coordination of policies and activities at the regional level is required, or where a country-based Resident Coordinator, for functional reasons, cannot serve effectively as Humanitarian Coordinator, the IASC under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator may consider the designation of a lead agency to assume the responsibilities of humanitarian coordinator. This designation shall be made according to the particular circumstance of the emergency and drawing from an inter-agency analysis of those circumstances. In their

comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, IASC members stated that, in general, they believed the Humanitarian Coordinators system to be more effectively managed than was the case three years ago. However, there were still situations where coordinating arrangements in place did not provide the strong leadership needed to resolve competition and disagreements between agencies. Also, there were occasional delays in the designation of Humanitarian Coordinators which were attributed to the inadequate pool of qualified candidates. A few IASC members considered that the IASC should exert, to the extent possible, more pressure to expedite the selection or replacement of Humanitarian Coordinators. One member of the Committee was concerned by the apparent move away, in 1999, from proposing that the Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator functions be performed by the same person. In a report to the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General noted that "further steps are foreseen by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, including improved training of country teams and sufficient delegation of authority to the field to ensure greater cohesiveness and integration of initiatives" (A/53/139-E/1998/67, para. 25). The Emergency Relief Coordinator encouraged all operational agencies to nominate candidates with prior humanitarian experience to participate in the competency assessment exercise for Resident Coordinators, and thereby to enrich the roster of candidates. The pool of candidates for the functions of Resident Coordinators in countries with humanitarian programmes and countries in crisis, examined by the Central Evaluation Unit early in 2000, indicates that 4 out of 19 candidates were affiliated to, or sponsored by, humanitarian agencies.

Recommendation 8
A Department of Humanitarian Affairs cadre of field support staff

Within its present financial strategy, the Department should build up a small cadre of staff at Headquarters who, in addition to their regular duties, could be rapidly dispatched to the field to support field coordination by: monitoring of preparedness measures; monitoring of and guidance with regard to contingency planning; monitoring support of operations to ensure that adequate attention is paid to all sectors and needs and that there are no gaps in coverage; and carrying out other tasks, as necessary, linked to mandated functions such as appeal preparation, information gathering and dissemination, and facilitation of access.

17. Since 1997, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has routinely deployed its own staff, on very short notice, to support field coordination efforts, most recently in the Balkans and East Timor. In addition, United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams — which include personnel from donor countries and humanitarian agencies, and were created for natural disaster response — were mobilized for "sudden-onset" complex emergencies as well. Such deployments are part of the Office's response to a new emergency, as well as, more recently, assistance to United Nations country teams to develop and implement contingency plans. The practice was strengthened during 1998 with the consolidation of all training and emergency roster functions in the Field Support Coordination Unit in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs/Geneva. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams may be deployed at 12 hours' notice but cannot remain in the emergency area for more than two months, which is sometimes insufficient in complex emergencies. In their comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, members of the IASC stated that the deployment in the field of the Office for the Coodination of Humanitarian Affairs staff has greatly assisted the coordination of humanitarian assistance in a number of situations but they are concerned with concurrent and prolonged absences from Headquarters of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator and a number of other staff of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. They observed that the ongoing work of the IASC has suffered when there was no adequate backup within that Office. The Office is utilizing a methodology on inter-agency contingency planning — Key Elements of Inter-Agency Contingency Planning — and is working with relevant United Nations agencies to strengthen this methodology. The Office has allocated funds for six country teams a year to be trained and assisted in preparing contingency plans for complex emergencies. Regular monitoring of preparedness measures is done for those plans that have been prepared by the United Nations country teams. For its part, UNDP commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that it has made arrangements for rapidly deployable personnel but would welcome more direct assistance to its country

offices from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, particularly in the areas of preparedness and contingency planning. Several IASC members considered that field offices of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs were often severely understaffed, or suffered from high turnover, and that, to strengthen coordination and ensure continuity, adequate staffing by personnel employed on a permanent basis is needed. In its comments to a draft of the present report, WFP stated that the cadre of field coordination support staff should not be exclusively Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs but should be drawn from the key operational agencies as well, through a mechanism of secondment that could be formalized.

2. Division of labour

Recommendation 9
Early agreement on allocation of responsibilities

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee should delegate to the Emergency Relief Coordinator the authority to make final decisions on the allocation of responsibilities between agencies in emergency humanitarian assistance programmes requiring a coordinated response if no early agreement is reached through the normal process of consultations. The overriding consideration in such circumstances should be that the pace of preparations for and delivery of emergency assistance should not be delayed by the issue of allocating responsibilities for programmes, and for their coordination. Terms of reference for the scope of the Emergency Relief Coordinator's decision-making authority in situations where the Committee cannot reach consensus should be adopted by the Committee before the end of 1997.

18. The terms of reference for the scope of the Emergency Relief Coordinator's decision-making proposed in recommendation 9 above were not adopted by IASC. Instead, the Committee issued recommendations providing guidance on coordination arrangements as well as delineating responsibilities among the operational agencies (see para. 13 above). To facilitate early agreement on allocation of responsibilities, the Emergency Relief Coordinator engaged in continuous informal consultations with members of the IASC, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs fielded many joint needs-assessment missions. Progress is uneven, as noted in paragraphs 15 and 16 above. In their comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, several members of the IASC stated that, in a number of situations, agreement on the allocation of responsibilities still took too long to reach, and that existing mechanisms to ensure early agreement need to be strengthened.

Recommendation 10
Operational predictability in the response to emergencies

By the end of 1997, the Emergency Relief Coordinator should propose to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines and standards to facilitate the conclusion of bilateral agreements between agencies on roles and responsibilities for permanent arrangements to enhance operational predictability taking into account resources available throughout the United Nations system in the response to emergencies. The guidelines and standards should take into account mandates and expertise existing both within and outside the United Nations system.

19. In 1998, in response to Office of Internal Oversight Services follow-up, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs explained that, by the time CPC recommendations became available, the process of concluding bilateral memoranda of understanding between agencies was at such an advanced stage that it was not considered necessary to develop the guidelines and standards envisaged in recommendation 10. For example, UNHCR concluded memoranda of understanding with its major operational partners (e.g., WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, IOM). In its comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, UNHCR stated, however, that within the humanitarian system, there is no operational predictability as yet in response to situations of internally displaced persons (IDPs) see para. 20 below).

Recommendation 11
Department of Humanitarian Affairs role in addressing gaps in the response to emergencies

(a) Where gaps are identified in the response of the United Nations system to humanitarian emergencies, the Department should

work with the most appropriate operational agencies to build up their in-house capacities to fill these gaps, taking into account the capacities of organizations outside the United Nations system;

(b) The Department's involvement in the coordination and implementation of issue-specific programmes should be on an exceptional and transitory basis, and at the request of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

20. With the establishment of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in 1998, operational responsibilities that had been entrusted to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs as a consequence of gaps in the response to emergencies were redistributed to other parts of the United Nations system. For example, Department of Humanitarian Affairs functions related to demining activities were transferred to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The IASC Working Group reached agreement that Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs coordination of issue-specific programmes should be carried out on an exceptional basis. Currently, the major outstanding gaps relate to the issues of IDPs and demobilization. In paragraph 11 of agreed conclusions 1998/1,[2] the Economic and Social Council encouraged the Emergency Relief Coordinator, as focal point for the issue, "to work closely with all agencies and organizations involved, in particular with the Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs". In 1998, the Representative of the Secretary-General presented to the Commission on Human Rights a normative framework for the internally displaced, the guiding principles on internal displacement (E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2). The Commission encouraged the members of IASC to share the Principles with their Executive Boards and staff, and to apply them in their activities. In 1999, guidelines on field practices and internal displacement were endorsed by IASC, and members were finalizing a training module on IDPs. The Senior Adviser to the Emergency Relief Coordinator on IDPs undertook three country reviews, and plans of action were developed in two countries to implement his recommendations. Regarding the issue of demobilization and the assignment of responsibilities to organizations of the United Nations system, the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs agreed in September 1999 to establish a Task Force to examine this issue in the context of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The Task Force convened an expert working group, chaired by UNDP, which made recommendations on assignment of responsibilities in this context for review and endorsement by the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs.

3. Resource mobilization

Recommendation 12
Appeals launched in advance of inter-agency consolidated appeals

For emergencies requiring a coordinated response, agencies should appeal for funds only in the context of the inter-agency consolidated appeal, based on an allocation of responsibilities and a strategic plan agreed upon by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. If separate agency appeals are needed in advance of the consolidated appeal to cover urgent needs of the affected population, such appeals should be launched only with the agreement of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and with clear indication of their purpose and status. The required consultations should not impede agencies in meeting their mandated responsibilities.

21. Since 1997, separate agency appeals have been very rare. Where agencies needed to launch an appeal before the consolidated inter-agency appeal, they have sought the agreement of the Emergency Relief Coordinator. However, in 1998, the effectiveness of the consolidated appeals process itself was the subject of concern, as donor response was decreasing. In 1994, 80 per cent of funds required in the appeals were provided, in 1996, 62 per cent, and in 1998, only 54 per cent. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs consulted with a wide range of humanitarian partners and established a sub-working group of the IASC to consider measures that would correct the shortcomings of the process. The group focused on improving the strategic planning within the consolidated appeals process, standardizing the procedures for the preparation of appeal documents and promoting monitoring mechanisms. All the consolidated inter-agency appeals are now launched on the same day, a few weeks before the new funding period. For example, the appeals for 2000 were launched in November 1999 by the Secretary-General himself. In the case of new emergencies, funds are

raised through flash appeals, which present to donors the best estimate of urgent needs. In the initial phase of emergencies, funds can also be drawn from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, established in 1992 as a cash-flow mechanism. The 1997 in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs noted that, among several factors, "constraints in the utilization of the Fund also reduced its usefulness and relevance" (E/AC.51/1997/3, para. 40). In its comments to a draft of the present report, UNICEF stated that part of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund should be available, on a non-reimbursable basis, in support to the United Nations coordinated response to humanitarian emergencies, particularly at the onset of such emergencies. In this connection, the existing capacity at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to deploy field coordination staff on short notice was reviewed in paragraph 17 above.

22. In their comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, IASC members recognized the progress achieved in the appeal process, and noted improvements in donor response. Funding disparities between countries, programme sectors and agencies still exist. For example, in 1998, 78 per cent of funds required for humanitarian assistance in Angola were provided; only 48 per cent were provided for assistance to Liberia. Also in 1998, WFP raised 80 per cent of the funds for which it had appealed, and UNHCR raised 76 per cent, but UNDP raised only 30 per cent, WHO 11 per cent, and FAO 10 per cent. This sectoral imbalance is sometimes explained by inadequate linkages between emergency and development assistance. In their comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, several agencies stated that there is a need for a new approach in field offices and agency headquarters to planning, the response of the United Nations to emergencies and rehabilitation strategies. Linkage between emergency and rehabilitation is reviewed in paragraph 29 below. With regard to the response to emergencies, prior to the onset of a full-fledged crisis, contingency planning by United Nations Resident Coordinators and agencies field offices, with the support of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, contributes to developing inter-agency planning scenarios. Once an emergency has started, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs considers that forward planning is a crucial part of the ongoing work of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and his/her coordination support staff. "It is essential that they do not get so preoccupied by the immediate relief needs that they fail to ... project alternative scenarios for different directions the emergency may take, and make preparations for the changing needs and operating conditions that may arise" (OCHA Orientation Handbook on Complex Emergencies, 1999, p. 12).

Recommendation 13
Global monitoring of emergency assistance

The Department of Humanitarian Affairs should develop its capacity to monitor actively and report on contributions to emergency humanitarian assistance and remaining needs. This monitoring should cover all sources of assistance. To facilitate such monitoring, the Department should pursue the adoption of guidelines and standards, within the framework of the non-governmental organizations Code of Conduct, for agencies outside the United Nations system providing emergency assistance.

23. In response to Office of Internal Oversight Services follow-up in 1998, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated that an Appeals Monitoring and Reporting Unit had been created within the Office to enhance its capacity to monitor emergency assistance, and that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs participated in inter-agency consultations on enhancing system-wide monitoring and accountability. Regarding financial tracking of contributions and reporting, members of IASC stated to the Central Evaluation Unit that the source of difficulties was not the system set up by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs but the inadequate reporting from the donors and the recipient agencies resulting in the imprecise data available to the Office. The 1997 in-depth evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in relation to this issue of monitoring of assistance, noted that "a minimum of coordination with other initiatives was required" (E/AC.51/1997/3, para. 45). The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief does not require reporting to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The Sphere Project — launched in 1997 by non-governmental organization networks, with the participation of Governments of donor countries and United Nations agencies, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs — sought to develop a set of standards in core areas of

humanitarian assistance to improve the quality of assistance provided and the accountability of humanitarian agencies. The improved consolidated appeals process Technical Guidelines released by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in March 1999 focus on strategic planning and monitoring. The Guidelines prescribed, *inter alia*, that planning documents mention assistance programmes taking place outside the context of the consolidated appeals process. Pilot projects to operationalize the guidelines were implemented at the end of 1999.

4. Advocacy of humanitarian principles and concerns

Recommendation 14
Advocacy of humanitarian issues and concerns with the policy-making organs of the United Nations

[(a) Not endorsed by CPC;]

(b) The Emergency Relief Coordinator should brief members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee without delay on results of consultations within the Framework for Coordination of the Departments of Humanitarian Affairs, Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations, and on his meetings with the Secretary-General and with the Security Council and other policy-making organs, as appropriate.

24. The Emergency Relief Coordinator kept members of the IASC promptly informed of results of consultations with other departments on policy issues, as well as his meetings with the Secretary-General, the Security Council and other policy-making organs. The establishment of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs has facilitated the exchange of information on such issues. It is noted that the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs took a more active role in the advocacy of humanitarian issues, particularly with respect to the Security Council. The Council is now routinely briefed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and IASC members on humanitarian aspects of crises. Regarding the humanitarian impact of sanctions, the General Assembly requested that the sanctions committees "give priority to the humanitarian problems that could arise from the application of sanctions", and that potential problems be brought immediately to the attention of the Security Council (resolution 51/242, annex II, para. 31). The Assembly decided that the Office should play a coordinating role in organizing and conducting assessments of the humanitarian needs and the vulnerabilities of target countries. Among several initiatives, with the support of IASC members, the Office is involved in developing methodologies to address the humanitarian impact of sanctions.

Recommendation 15
Coordination with activities other than humanitarian assistance

Guidelines should be adopted and disseminated to all field missions and headquarters units on coordination between humanitarian organizations, on the one hand, and special representatives or envoys of the Secretary-General, political missions, peacekeeping missions and similar field activities, on the other hand; the guidelines should be applied taking into account the specificity of each situation.

25. In paragraph 12 of its Recommendations of 15 October 1998, IASC recommended that depending on the functions and responsibilities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in a given country or region, his/her relationship with the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should be clarified at the earliest possible instance. In paragraph 13 of the Recommendations, the IASC considered, in particular, that the institutional links between the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should be designed to maintain the required close dialogue while protecting the particular identity and objectives of the humanitarian programme, and that the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should continue to be directly accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator regarding emergency humanitarian assistance. In paragraph 12 of agreed conclusions 1998/1, the Economic and Social Council fully supports "efforts to clarify the parameters of authority for the resident/humanitarian coordinator functions". In 1999, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in consultation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations humanitarian agencies, finalized the Note of Guidance: Relations

between Humanitarian Coordinators and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. After adoption by the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs submitted the Note, in June 1999, to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General for review and approval. On the basis of the information available as of late February 2000, the Central Evaluation Unit could not determine when the Note would be approved. At the retreat of Humanitarian Coordinators in November 1999, participants stated that coordination with United Nations political and peacekeeping actors did not work properly and that there was a general lack of understanding of humanitarian principles among the political and military personnel at the field level. They urged clarification of the interaction between humanitarian, political and peacekeeping components of the United Nations in complex emergencies. In 2000, this issue as well as the concern for the security of humanitarian workers will be one of the priorities of the IASC Working Group.

5. Collection, analysis and dissemination of information

Recommendation 16
Enhancing the capacity to provide early warning analyses to the Secretary-General and members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

(a) On the basis of a report by the Administrative Committee on Coordination Working Group on Early Warning of New Flows of Refugees and Displaced Persons submitted before the end of 1997, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee should agree on a minimum common methodology for gathering, analysing and sharing information pertinent to early signals of humanitarian crises;

(b) Without duplicating specialized early warning systems operated by agencies, inter-agency consultations should, on the basis of consolidated analyses prepared by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, review on a monthly basis short-to-long-term perspectives of situations of concern. Actionable recommendations from the Working Group addressed to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee should include, where relevant, prevention or preparedness initiatives.

26. No common methodology for early warning analyses was agreed upon by IASC members. Early warning signals were discussed at the weekly inter-agency consultations held in New York and Geneva. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has been focusing the bulk of its early warning attention on strengthening and supporting the United Nations inter-agency/departmental Framework for Coordination early warning mechanism. This has included doubling its membership in 1999 to add five United Nations humanitarian agencies: FAO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. As the secretariat to the Framework Team, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has promoted the development of the methodology for country review analyses, and the Team is giving increasing attention to the identification and implementation of preparedness and preventive recommendations. The Framework Team now conducts frequent country reviews of situations of concern, with broad participation by United Nations departments and agencies. Within the Office, the Information Analysis Unit intends, for the period 2000-2001, to strengthen information exchange regarding early warning information and to assist regional organizations in building early warning capacities within their respective regions.

Recommendation 17
Department of Humanitarian Affairs coordinated programme for the collection, analysis and dissemination of information

By the end of 1997, the Department should formulate a comprehensive strategy maximizing the complementarity of the Humanitarian Early Warning System, the Integrated Regional Information Network for the Great Lakes and ReliefWeb, and present a common funding strategy.

27. In 1998, with the establishment of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Humanitarian Early Warning System, ReliefWeb and the Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) were consolidated under a unified Headquarters management structure. Since then, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has discontinued the Humanitarian Early Warning System, and instead focused most of its limited early warning staff

resources on strengthening the Framework for Coordination early warning mechanism (see para. 26 above). This decision reflects both the importance of the inter-agency/departmental approach of the Framework Team, as well as changes in the context of the Humanitarian Early Warning System. These changes include the considerable expansion of early warning information publicly available on the Internet, and the increased number of entities outside the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs monitoring early warning indicators — such entities can provide their information to the Office, rather than requiring Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs resources to generate this information. For the period 2000-2001, one of the planned activities of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs subprogramme Humanitarian Emergency Information is to rationalize ReliefWeb, the web site OCHA on-line and IRIN to ensure a functional and non-duplicative relationship between them. Several IASC members noted that the development of ReliefWeb and IRIN had been very useful for their work. WHO stated that ReliefWeb is considered the leading source of disaster information on the web.

6. Relief and rehabilitation

Recommendation 18
Enhanced coordination with development programmes and agencies

(a) By the end of 1997, the Emergency Relief Coordinator should propose to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee a set of descriptive criteria to determine the conditions under which the need for a coordinated response to an emergency no longer exists, and where the coordination responsibility of the Emergency Relief Coordinator can accordingly cease;

(b) Department of Humanitarian Affairs-led consolidated appeals process resource mobilization exercises for countries in humanitarian crises should integrate in one strategy relief and rehabilitation programmes, with adequate involvement of a coordinating development programme or agency.

28. The "set of descriptive criteria to determine the conditions under which the need for a coordinated response to an emergency no longer exists" was not proposed to the IASC, as envisaged in recommendation 18 (a). In paragraph 26 of its Recommendations of 15 October 1998, the IASC agreed that United Nations system relief and development practitioners should, as a matter of principle and routine ... clearly define their exit and/or handover strategy to local interlocutors. In post-emergency situations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs seeks to hand over most of its activities to agencies mandated to coordinate rehabilitation programmes. In practice the transition from relief to rehabilitation is rarely clear-cut and, since 1997, there were situations where lasting recovery did not materialize, and relief coordination mechanisms, once phased out, were reactivated.

29. IASC approved the integration through the consolidated appeals process of relief and rehabilitation programmes in one strategy. Among other initiatives taken since 1997, the organizations of the United Nations system participated in the development of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), a tool for coordinating development programmes in close collaboration with Governments. In its 1999 review of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (see para. 33 below), the Office of Internal Oversight Services considered that "the linkage between the programming aspects of the consolidated appeal process and [UNDAF] provides the basis for strategically coordinated programming for recovery" (A/54/334, para. 30). In its comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, early in 2000, one member of the IASC stated that, although some recovery and rehabilitation programmes have been included in the consolidated appeals process, and considerable discussion has taken place in the IASC, the Economic and Social Council and elsewhere on linking relief to development, funding for effective transitions remains unpredictable and hard to obtain. In its comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, the World Bank — which joined the IASC in 1999 — acknowledged the need to make a more concerted effort to ensure as smooth a transition as possible from emergency relief to reconstruction and development. To this end, various mechanisms have been established to identify and operationalize ways to reduce the "gap" that exists between relief and development in a post-conflict context. UNDP, the World Bank and UNHCR form the secretariat of the Brookings Process, which began in November 1998 as an initiative to address conceptually issues related to "bridging this gap". Additionally, the

IASC Reference Group on Post-Conflict Reintegration, chaired by UNDP and with participation from IASC members, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, and relevant non-governmental organizations, is working to identify innovative ways of concretely reducing the gap in post-conflict situations.

7. Lessons learned and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Recommendation 19
Dissemination of lessons learned and best practices

Drawing on the units contributing to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs lessons learned studies, to the revision or development of policies and guidelines, and to the dissemination of related documentation, the Emergency Relief Coordinator should propose to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee by the end of 1997 a procedure to ensure effective follow-up on lessons learned and best practices. The agreed-on procedure should be implemented in collaboration with the relevant units of members of the Committee.

30. The procedure recommended in recommendation 19 was not proposed to the IASC. The IASC subsidiary groups provided a setting to analyse and review the coordination practices in various emergencies. In its comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, WHO stated that its Regional Office for the Americas mentioned excellent experiences, in particular, the joint evaluation meeting of the United Nations system organized after Hurricane Mitch. Nevertheless, in their comments, members of the IASC noted that lessons learned activity has been reduced in 1999, and considered that an effective procedure for sharing lessons learned was still needed.

8. Using methods and practices of disaster relief

Recommendation 20
Review of the usefulness of disaster relief practices in the complex emergencies environment

By the end of 1997, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should complete a review of the possibilities of further integration of its programmes for natural disasters and complex emergencies. Any integration proposed should preserve the effectiveness of the methods and practices in different types of situations.

31. In response to Office of Internal Oversight Services follow-up, in 1998, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs confirmed that it used methods and practices designed for natural disaster relief in the complex emergencies environment. In 1999, an IASC reference group on natural disasters was established to work "on a set of recommendations on the strengthening of the mechanisms of response to natural disasters of IASC members, at both headquarters and field levels" (A/54/154-E/1999/94, para. 34). The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated that the review by the group "would also examine the synergy between [the United Nations response to] natural disasters and complex emergencies" (A/54/6 (sect. 25) table 25.20, p. 41). The group finalized its report early in 2000. It is not clear to the Central Evaluation Unit, however, how recommendations presented in the report might be useful in the context of complex emergencies, as the group limited its work to the response to natural disasters.

C. Other issues

Recommendation 21
Department of Humanitarian Affairs strategy for raising awareness

(a) The Department should propose a strategy for raising awareness of humanitarian principles and policies to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. The agreed-on strategy should become a component of the Committee's yearly work plan and should be implemented in collaboration with all Committee members;

(b) Briefings and information provided by the Department to Member States should not be limited to updates on assistance provided in response to specific emergencies but should include information on a wider range of topics, such as the activities of the Department and regular reviews of decisions by intergovernmental bodies and their implications for humanitarian activities.

32. Members of the IASC, in their comments to the Central Evaluation Unit, commended the efforts of the Emergency Relief Coordinator to raise awareness of humanitarian principles and policies at the global level. In addition to briefings to the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs representatives briefed agency governing bodies, at their invitation, on a range of topics envisaged in recommendation 21 (b). In the meantime, IASC is still discussing modalities for the dissemination of IASC decisions and policy papers that have been jointly agreed upon. In 1998, the Office and IASC developed a set of principles/ground rules for humanitarian action in the field to ensure that the principles on which United Nations humanitarian assistance is based are understood and accepted. A first draft of the document entitled "Protecting principles under stress" was finalized at the end of 1998 but, since then, IASC has not taken action on it.

Recommendation 22
Follow-up to the management study

Improvements in the management of the Department made as a follow-up to the 1996 management study should be assessed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services by the end of 1998. This assessment should include a review of the issue of core functions and their funding.

33. The recommendations of the 1996 management study were taken into account in the establishment of Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as well as the issue of the core functions of the former Department of Humanitarian Affairs and their funding. In 1999, the Office of Internal Oversight Services reviewed the management strategies of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and assessed how well it focused on its core functions. The inspection by the Office of Internal Oversight Services concluded that the "streamlining and reorganization within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs have enhanced the capabilities of that Office to respond to emerging humanitarian crises" (A/54/334, para. 40).

III. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

34. Implementation of the recommendations made by CPC at its thirty-seventh session was facilitated by the restructuring of the Secretariat and the measures taken, during the period 1997-1999, to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance. As a result, support to the IASC has been enhanced, and progress has been made in addressing gaps in the response to emergencies — in the development of humanitarian policy as well as in operations. The mechanisms to plan and monitor emergency assistance have been improved. Advocacy of humanitarian concerns by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Office is appreciated by humanitarian agencies. The transfer of operational activities conducted by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs before the reorganization of the Secretariat is almost completed.

35. Efforts are still needed to make the work of the IASC more decision-oriented, to ensure stronger field coordination, to maintain close dialogue with activities other than humanitarian assistance, and to promote rehabilitation programmes. In this regard, recent steps taken by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the members of the IASC — such as improvements in the preparation of IASC meetings, revision of selection procedures for Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators, issuance of revised technical guidelines of the consolidated appeals process — and action to implement them, may help to address a number of difficulties. Assistance to field coordination by the Office, particularly in the areas of preparedness and contingency planning, needs to be provided in a manner that does not risk curtailing core activities at Headquarters.

36. There remain, in addition, three significant problems. The rapid response to emergencies is still hindered by the absence of special United Nations administrative and financial rules and procedures, suited to emergency situations. In a related matter, the Steering Committee of the IASC, proposed by the

Secretary-General in 1997 to enhance a rapid-response capacity to humanitarian emergencies, has not yet been established. Lastly, an effective procedure for sharing lessons learned is still needed. These issues were addressed in recommendations 1 and 19 of the in-depth evaluation which were endorsed by CPC at its thirty-seventh session. The issue of the IASC Steering Committee is related to recommendation 6, on support to the IASC, which stressed that the IASC should quickly reach consensus on coordination arrangements, division of operational responsibilities and related matters.

B. Recommendations

37. The Office of Internal Oversight Services makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1
Special United Nations emergency rules and procedures

In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 46/182 and Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1998/1, special emergency rules and procedures should be developed by the end of 2000. These special emergency rules and procedures would incorporate the adaptations already made with regard to financial procedures as they relate to the requirements of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs emergency activities, address related issues concerning personnel and procurement arrangements, and make any other adjustments needed. (See paras. 5-7 above.)

Recommendation 2
Steering Committee of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

The Steering Committee of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee proposed by the Secretary-General in 1997 in his programme for reform, or a similar mechanism, should be established by the end of 2000 to ensure that: (a) decisions of members of the Standing Committee in response to crisis situations requiring immediate action are taken rapidly and based on coherent policy; (b) consultations are conducted, as appropriate, with the full membership of the Standing Committee. (See paras. 15 and 18 above.)

Recommendation 3
Dissemination of lessons learned and best practices

Drawing on the units within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee contributing to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs lessons learned studies, to the revision or development of policies and guidelines, and to the dissemination of related documentation, the Emergency Relief Coordinator should propose to the Standing Committee by the end of 2000 a procedure to ensure effective follow-up on lessons learned and best practices. The agreed-on procedure should be implemented in collaboration with the relevant units of members of the Committee. Under this procedure, arrangements should be adopted so that the effective implementation of recently agreed-upon policies, such as on gender, is monitored. (See paras. 13 and 20 above.)

(Signed) Hans **Corell**
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Overseer, Office of Internal Oversight Services

Notes

[1] See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/52/16).

[2] Ibid., Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/53/3 and Corr.1), chap. VII.

[3] See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/54/1), paras. 28, 30 and 35.